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### Project Introduction/Abstract/Summary

Project Title: NC Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Proposal (PDG B-5)  
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Introduction: North Carolina has developed a draft *NC Early Childhood Action Plan* based on a statewide vision that all children in NC get a healthy start and develop to their full potential in safe and nurturing families, early learning programs, schools and communities. NC has a proud history of innovation and success in early childhood, but at the same time, faces significant challenges to ensure that all children – particularly its most vulnerable – have the experiences they need to build a strong foundation for healthy development and learning. NC is pleased to submit this application for PDG B-5 funding that will support our efforts to enhance our strengths, and address challenges we currently face.

Summary: NC has developed a strong plan to comprehensively and efficiently conduct a B-5 Needs Assessment (Activity 1) to inform our ongoing planning to strengthen the early childhood system. The plan addresses the nine requirements listed in the FOA and builds on existing needs assessments.

NC will finalize and strengthen its strategic plan (Activity 2) to ensure the state's early childhood system best meets the needs of young children, particularly our most vulnerable children, and their families by building on existing efforts, engaging stakeholders across systems, and leveraging resources by partnering across agencies, organizations and systems. The strategic plan will incorporate conducting a broad analysis of data access across the early childhood system, and planning implementation of strategies in NC's Early Childhood Action Plan.

Family engagement and providing timely and accurate information are key components of NC's PDG Activity 3 to maximize parent knowledge and choice. In NC, many programs continue to struggle to successfully engage families and to provide timely and accurate information in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. The PDG B-5 grant will support four strategies to address this need.

Three strategies are planned to share best practices (Activity 4), targeting areas of need in NC. NC will work with counties with successful models of universal enrollment processes to mentor others to expand these practices. NC will also provide support for more successful transitions from preschool to kindergarten. A third strategy addresses sharing and aligning data to promote data-informed decision making.

For Activity 5, NC has targeted infant and toddler care for improving overall quality knowing that this area has been challenging. NC Babies First (NCB1), modeled after NC PreK, will increase access to high quality, center-based early learning programs for families with infants, one- and two-year olds.

The overall structure of our activities and plan for managing them is strong. NC has the leadership, organizational, fiscal and infrastructure capacity to successfully implement our PDG B-5 plan and make a meaningful difference in the lives of children, and their families in our state.

**Project Description**  
**A. Expected Outcomes**

NC's PDG B-5 Proposal includes activities that support our state's effort to continue to improve our early care and education system to ensure that it gives equitable access to high-quality programs for all children and families. See Table 1 below for the expected outcomes.

**Table 1:**

**Short-Term Outcomes**

1. Early childhood programs are better able to serve children and families.
2. State and local agencies are more likely to offer services that meet the needs of families with young children.
3. More families of young children know about services and can easily access them.

**Medium-Term Outcomes**

1. NC's mixed delivery system offers a continuum of high-quality services that meet families' needs.
2. Families and children who need services are more likely to use services.
3. More young children who receive needed services are healthy and learning.
4. More families feel more supported in helping their children be safe, healthy, and ready to learn.
5. More families provide a safe, nurturing environment and support their children's health and development.

**Long-Term Outcomes**

1. By 2025, all NC young children from birth to 8 will be healthy, safe and nurtured, and learning and ready to succeed.

**B. State B-5 Mixed Delivery System Description and Vision Statement**

NC has intentionally built a resilient and connected mixed delivery system so that families may access high quality early child care services and programs across the state. Below is a visual representation of NC's early care and education (ECE) mixed delivery system which is part of the larger B-5 State Early Childhood System.



**Mixed Delivery System Description and Supports:** In NC, the mixed delivery system includes licensed private-for-profit and non-profit child care programs; NC Pre-K sites; Head Start programs; and Public School Preschool programs. NC has built its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) into its child care licensing system so that every licensed child care program earns a star rated license from 1 to 5. NC Pre-K sites and nearly all Head Start

programs also participate in the rated license system which allows for consistent and aligned policies across these programs.

Currently, over 180,000 children 0 – 5 are enrolled in licensed **child care programs serving children** in public, private-for-profit and non-profit settings. Most (96%) of these children are enrolled in child care centers rather than child care homes. Eighty seven (87%) of child care centers have earned a 3 to 5 Star license. NC is unique compared to most states because of the high level of participation at the 3, 4 or 5-star level. The **NC Pre-K** program is designed to provide high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year-olds who meet the at-risk eligibility criteria. In 2018-19, the NC Pre-K program served approximately 29,800 (about 47% of eligible 4 year olds) children across NC in one of three settings; private child care facilities, public schools and Head Start sites. Each of these settings must meet the highest of the child care licensure requirements (4 or 5 stars) and meet additional requirements that exceed the 5 star rules. **Head Start/Early Head Start/Migrant Head Start/Tribal Head Start** - Head Start is the federally funded, comprehensive preschool program designed to meet the emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs of children aged 3 to 5 and their families. The Early Head Start program is the companion program created to address the same needs of children birth to age 3, expectant mothers, and their families. In North Carolina, approximately 17,000 children are enrolled in Head Start (28% of eligible children) and 4,600 (5% of eligible children) are enrolled in Early Head Start. Migrant Head Start serves about 440 children and Tribal Head Start serves about 250 children. **Public School Preschool Programs** include the Preschool Exceptional Children program (Part B) which serves three and four-year-old children who have been identified with special needs and the Title I

Preschool Program which is designed to improve cognitive, health and social-emotional outcomes for eligible children who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten.

**Policies and programs that support the mixed delivery system:** Coordinated policies and programs have been key to supporting high quality within NC's mixed delivery system. The NC Partnership for Children (NCPC) and the local Smart Start partnerships support early care and education (ECE) access and quality in all of NC's 100 counties, and invest in other community needs for improving early childhood outcomes, including early literacy programs and family support. To support quality across the continuum, *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development (Foundations)* was developed through a collaborative effort between the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). To ensure continuous quality improvement, NC's QRIS provides a pathway to quality as ECE programs progress from 1 to 5 stars. Programs that achieve higher ratings are eligible for higher reimbursement rates through the State's subsidized child care program.

Workforce supports and technical assistance are provided so that ECE providers are in the best position possible to deliver high quality programs to families. This system of support is funded by local, state and federal funds and includes NC's *Higher Education Pathway* which allows teachers to begin their education at either a community college or university; *T.E.A.C.H.* Early Childhood® Scholarships for early educators including NC Pre-K and infant toddler educators working in licensed facilities; and education-based salary supplements through the Child Care WAGE\$® and Early Educator AWARD\$ Program for low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers. In addition, a *professional development* continuum (from short workshops to programs with CEUs to formal course work) provides ongoing support and education to the

workforce. A number of *technical assistance (TA)* opportunities provide supports to teachers and administrators to develop quality improvement plan within their classrooms or programs. In NC, technical assistance content areas are varied (e.g., Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC), Infant Toddler Quality Enhancement and Healthy Social Behaviors Support) and are provided by several organizations, including NC Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), local Smart Start Partnerships and DPI's Office of Early Learning. Individualized supports are provided to B-K licensed teachers working in NC Pre-K and Developmental Day classrooms through mentoring to assist them in receiving and maintaining that licensure.

Family information, support, and access are vital components of NC's coordinated system.

*Consumer education* is a core service of NC's CCR&R system. The system is regionally organized around 14 hubs and provides access to early childhood resources and support services.

In some communities, CCR&R and Smart Start support a "one-stop" system to help streamline access to information and services for families. One-stop systems of support provide information and access to child care subsidies; eligibility determination services for multiple ECE programs; quality early education literacy programs; access to parenting and job supports; child emotional-social-behavioral health interventions; dental and other comprehensive health screenings and services; medical home (e.g., pediatrician or other primary care giver); nutrition (e.g., WIC services); and health insurance (e.g., Medicaid, Health Choice).

*Child Care Subsidies* provide stable financial assistance to families and ensure equal access to child care for low income children. Using a combination of state and federal funds, DCDEE ensures that subsidized child care services are provided to a large number (over 72,000 each month) of low income and other eligible families. DCDEE develops and promotes child care subsidy program policies, ensures that payment rates to providers promote access to quality care,

monitors local purchasing agencies for program compliance, provides technical assistance and training to county departments of social services, and ensures that services to families are seamless regardless of funding source.

Data from a number of ECE programs feed into the *NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System (NC ECIDS)* - the sole source of integrated data across multiple ECE programs in NC. NC ECIDS allows for data analyses that can provide unduplicated counts of children being served across early childhood, social services, public health and education programs and services, and a better understanding of how many children receive multiple services and which services. NC ECIDS will also be able to link data on children participating in these services to the quality of programs and workforce credentials, and eventually to longitudinal outcomes through linking to state longitudinal education data systems through DPI.

The mixed delivery system, and the policies and programs that support it, are *funded with a mix of public and private funds*. State funds include legislatively appropriated funds for NC Pre-K, child care subsidy, and Smart Start. Federal funds include NC's Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF), TANF and Head Start funds that help families access high quality child care programs. State lottery dollars are used to support NC Pre-K program, and private funds, received by local smart start partnerships, are used to expand supports to programs. NC has a long history of *cross-system collaborative* work that supports the mixed delivery system. The NC Partnership for Children (NCPC) and the local Smart Start Partnerships have provided the leadership and infrastructure necessary to build strong local coalitions that work to build a community-driven system of effective services that meets the needs of families with young children. Other recent cross-systems work includes the development of the *NC Early Childhood Action Plan (NC ECAP)* with the vision that all children in NC get a healthy start and develop to

their full potential in safe and nurturing families, schools and communities; implementation of strategies identified in the *Pathways to Grade-level Reading (Pathways)* initiative; *creation of the NC Think Babies policy agenda* to ensure that all at-risk infants and toddlers have access to high quality early childhood development resources to increase their likelihood of success in school and in life; and ongoing use of the *NC Early Learning Standards*. In addition to these cross-system initiatives, the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and the NC Birth-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Interagency Coordinating Council (B-3 Interagency Council) are providing ongoing guidance to partners responsible for the quality and effectiveness of the early childhood mixed delivery system.

**Progress and Successes, Hurdles, Challenges, and Strategies of the Mixed Delivery System:**

NC has made progress in building a mixed delivery system that contributes to the State's commitment to ensuring that children in NC are healthy, safe and nurtured and ready to succeed. NC has been successful in embedding its QRIS across all licensed early care and education programs. The strategies of tying the QRIS to licensing, child care subsidy, and the NC Pre-K program have provided a consistent set of standards for quality care based on teacher education and program standards; with tiered reimbursements providing incentive for more programs moving toward the highest QRIS ratings.

It has also been advantageous for several components of the mixed delivery system to be overseen by DCDEE, such as licensing, NC Pre-K, subsidy, workforce education, QRIS, and CCDF. This allows for service delivery that is more efficient and seamless to families as program requirements and policies are aligned among programs. As the administrator of significant funding that supports the system, DCDEE is also able to ensure that resources are targeted for services and technical assistance where needed across the state. Another key to

progress is NC's continued emphasis on the importance of a state and local approach to solving problems. Continuing to support locally-driven initiatives that are supported by aligned State infrastructure is critical to efforts to strengthen the mixed delivery system.

There are still challenges to be faced in further improving the mixed delivery system.

While statewide data show a significant increase in higher quality programs over time as measured by the QRIS, there are still portions of the state that lack a sufficient capacity of high quality care, especially for infants and toddlers. In addition, the QRIS does not include significant family engagement so it is difficult to prioritize that work in a system where providers have limited time and resources. While NC has a solid system to provide technical assistance, resources and support to providers and programs working toward higher quality, it has been a challenge to coordinate professional development across various agencies that support the mixed delivery system (DCDEE, Smart Start, Head Start, DPI). Best practices around universal enrollment and transitions are in place in some communities in NC, but many communities need technical assistance and mentoring to implement these practices. Lastly, there is a significant amount of variability in how well state or local agencies in the mixed delivery system meaningfully engage families and develop services that respond to family's needs. The PDG B-5 provides an opportunity to address these ongoing challenges through the needs assessment and strategic planning processes and through activities carefully designed to address key challenges.

**The Mixed Delivery System Vision and Impact on Quality, Coordination, Alignment and**

**Efficiency of Programs and Services:** To increase the quality, coordination, alignment and efficiency of programs and services, NC's vision for its mixed delivery system is that children and families receive services across a spectrum of programs that meet their needs, and that all supports to those programs are available to all providers within the system. This vision drives

strong collaborations among partners to ensure coordination of programs and services. The needs assessment and strategic planning processes that are part of the PDG B-5 grant provide an opportunity to revisit and refine the mixed delivery system vision as needed. NC's early childhood partners are particularly interested in getting input from families with young children about how the mixed delivery systems meets, or does not meet, their needs and how the system might evolve to meet the increasingly diverse needs of families in NC.

**Leveraging Key Partners and Stakeholders to Achieve Vision and Grant Activities:** The process of leveraging key partners and stakeholders began in planning the PDG B-5 proposal; the grant draws heavily on the NC ECAP and the Pathways work built with broad stakeholder (including families) engagement and used to create a vision for the State. A representative team was assembled to write the PDG B-5 proposal. A number of partners, e.g., NCPC, NC Head Start State Collaboration Office, DPI's Office of Early Learning, NC Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF), Child Care Services Association, Governor's Office, and the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) Office of the Secretary helped DCDEE develop the vision and set priorities, and provided well thought out strategies for goals to be accomplished in a 12 month period. The proposed activities in the PDG B-5 will require ongoing participation by these partners and others, including families. DCDEE will continue to leverage a broad array of partners and stakeholders by inviting participation early in the process and by asking those partners and stakeholders to expand participation by sharing information and inviting feedback from their networks. Specific strategies may require a specific or targeted engagement plan. A variety of mechanisms (in-person meetings, online, webinars, etc.) will be available to allow partners and stakeholders to participate in ways that work for them. In addition to inviting participation, DCDEE will continue to reference an extensive body of work

completed by partners over the last several years in designing and implementing PDG B-5 activities.

As noted above, NC's ECAC provides ongoing guidance to partners responsible for the quality and effectiveness of the ECE mixed delivery system, and the PDG B-5 provides an opportunity to expand the Council's capacity to do that work. Governor Roy Cooper established the ECAC in February 2018. Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary, NC DHHS, chairs the Council, which includes 25 members appointed by the Governor from education (from early childhood through higher education), as well as representatives from business, government, research, philanthropy, health care, mental health, social services, and parents. The ECAC supports NC's vision for action to advance early childhood health, education, and well-being, birth through age 8. Governor Cooper has charged the Council to support the development and implementation of the NC ECAP. The Council also fulfills the federal requirements for state advisory councils that support statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide range of ECE programs in the state. It will provide the high-level oversight required for effective implementation of the PDG B-5 Grant.

To build the capacity of the ECAC to support the NC ECAP and provide effective oversight of the PDG B-5 grant, an Executive Committee will be formed to support the Governor's Office and the Council Chair to help set Council agendas and to identify and plan for targeted development (e.g. training and technical assistance) on topics that may include: 1) understanding and promoting effective ECE systems building for improving child and family outcomes; 2) using a racial equity lens to understand and support the needs of the most vulnerable children and families; 3) understanding and supporting a family-centered approach to systems building and quality services; 4) understanding and using the principles of implementation science; 5) others

as identified in planning. Funding will be used to provide meeting planning, meeting facilitation, and expert consultation services to support the specific capacity building needs of the ECAC as identified by the Governor’s Office and the Executive Committee.

**C. Project Approach: Activities 1-5**  
**Activity 1 – B-5 Needs Assessment**

**Description:** NC has a strong plan to comprehensively and efficiently conduct a B-5 Needs Assessment (B-5 NA) to inform our ongoing planning to strengthen the early childhood system. The plan addresses each of the nine requirements listed in the FOA and builds on existing needs assessments.

DCDEE will contract with one or more qualified organizations to review existing information and collect new data (e.g., focus groups with ECE providers and families) as part of the B-5 NA. The B-5 NA will focus on five major topics: 1) data needs, 2) quality and availability of ECE services, 3) availability and usefulness of information for families; 4) transitions to public school, and 5) collaboration and coordination across the early childhood system. The B-5 NA will begin by defining children who are vulnerable or unserved, including those living in rural communities, and will describe important trends in NC (e.g., number of young children whose families are experiencing homelessness) as context for the B-5 NA. The B-5 NA will then address the five major topics, focusing on a) summarizing relevant information from recent needs assessments, b) identifying gaps, c) collecting new data to fill the gaps, and d) offering recommendations about next steps in addressing the needs. Details about each of the five areas are provided below. See Table 2 at the end of this section for a crosswalk of the proposed NC B-5 NA topics and the PDG requirements listed on p. 26-27 of the FOA.

*Data needs.* NC uses data to a) determine whether we are reaching our intended outcomes as specified in our NC ECAP, b) know the unduplicated number of children served, and c) have a

sense of the unmet need (e.g., unduplicated number on the waiting list) to inform decisions about service expansion. For each type of data, the contractor will describe the data currently available (e.g., subsidy waitlist information in DCDEE database, survey of NC Pre-K providers about enrollment and capacity), identify gaps (e.g., home visiting data not currently included in the NC ECIDS) and make recommendations about next steps to fill the gaps. We will be particularly concerned with identifying data about vulnerable children, not just all children. (See section 1.5 for more details about the data aspect of the B-5 NA.)

*Quality and Availability of ECE Services.* This portion of the B-5 NA will describe the availability of high-quality ECE services, barriers to providing high-quality ECE, gaps in services, and recommended next steps. We will describe the availability of high-quality ECE services in many ways: statewide and by each of the 100 NC counties and in Tribal communities that cut across county lines, by setting type (e.g., family child care by setting type (e.g., family child care, centers), by age group (e.g., infant-toddler vs preschooler), geography (e.g., rural, suburban, urban), for children in low-income families (e.g., those receiving child care subsidies), and by shift of care needed (e.g., nontraditional working hours, standard shift).

We will also address barriers to providing high-quality ECE services, including facility-related concerns and funding challenges. The contractor will conduct focus groups of ECE providers (family child care as well as center directors) across the state to learn about various barriers. We will also expand NC's work with the Center for American Progress (CAP) to explore alternative cost methodologies for child care subsidy rates. DCDEE has been working with CAP, with support from the Pritzker Children's Initiative, to examine alternative cost methodologies for infants and toddlers. We would like to use the PDG B-5 opportunity to expand the current work to include preschoolers as well. This preliminary work will inform our strategic plan.

*Information for families.* The B-5 NA will summarize the main sources of information available to families with young children to help them learn about and choose ECE settings. This will include conducting focus groups with families of vulnerable children in urban, rural and Tribal areas to learn about their perceptions of the information provided and their trusted sources. This aspect of the B-5 NA will be especially informative to the family engagement activities. This section will also include recommendations about next steps for improving information to support families in choosing ECE services for their children.

*Transition to Public School.* This section of the B-5 NA will describe the availability of kindergarten transition supports across NC, building on the work of the B-3 Interagency Council committee on transitions. The B-3 Interagency Council work will also be used to develop and refine recommendations for how best to support successful transitions to public school, considering supports aimed at multiple levels (e.g., for families, shared professional development across B-5 and K-3, curriculum alignment).

*System Coordination and Collaboration.* The ECAC serves as the organizational entity that works to strengthen the state early childhood system across the multiple agencies and services. The B-5 NA will provide some information about the current levels of coordination and collaboration that the ECAC can use to inform its system recommendations.

<b>Table 2. Crosswalk of PDG FOA Requirements and NC Needs Assessment Plan</b>	
<b><i>PDG FOA Needs Assessment Requirement (paraphrased)</i></b>	<b><i>Topic for NC B-5 Needs Assessment</i></b>
Define key terms (e.g., vulnerable children)	Introduction of Report
Describe population of vulnerable children	Introduction of Report
Identify quality and availability of ECE services	Quality and Availability of ECE Services (topic 2)
Identify the unduplicated number of children served and unduplicated number of children awaiting services	Data Needs (topic 1)
Identify gaps in data about the quality and availability of B-5 services	Quality and Availability of ECE Services (topic 2)

Describe state’s plan to fill gaps to support collaboration and maximize parent choice	System Coordination and Collaboration (topic 5) Information for Families (topic 3)
Describe plan to develop/track measurable indicators of progress toward outcomes	Data Needs (topic 1)
Describe plan to address facility-related concerns, including funding for providing high-quality ECE	Quality and Availability of ECE Services (topic 2)
Address transition supports and gaps	Transitions (topic 4)

**Process for Developing a Needs Assessment (Scope and Work Plan):** The NC B-5 NA will be guided by a small advisory group who will meet regularly to help refine the scope of work and work plan, identify current sources of data and recent related needs assessments, and help identify next steps to address various gaps identified in the assessment. DCDEE will oversee this project and convene the advisory group. Advisory group members will include leaders from other key state efforts (e.g., NC ECAP, NC Think Babies Coalition, Pathways, B-3 Interagency Council) as well as the Governor’s staff liaison to the ECAC. A staff member at DCDEE will manage the B-5 NA, communicating at least twice a month with the team to ensure that the contractor completes the work well, within budget, and on time.

**Leveraging Other Needs Assessments to Inform the B-5 Needs Assessment:** NC will leverage other recent needs assessments as part of this B-5 NA. A few examples are noted here. We have begun to focus particularly on infants and toddlers, with support from the Pritzker Children’s Initiative and Zero to Three’s Think Babies™ Project and have conducted various needs assessments to understand the policies and services that support infants and toddlers. UNC-Chapel Hill has also recently completed a landscape analysis of NC’s home visiting (HV) services, which identifies, for example, areas of the state where there is a high need but low provision of HV services. We also periodically conduct, through Child Care Services Association, an ECE workforce survey. The Pathways project utilized an extensive stakeholder

engagement strategy to identify metrics and strategies to support children's ability to read on grade level by third grade. Finally, Head Start grantees and various state agencies periodically conduct needs assessments for federally- and state-funded programs. The contractor and advisory group will begin the B-5 NA by compiling and summarizing all the relevant existing information, organized into the five topic areas described above. They will then determine which new data need to be collected and whether any other existing data (e.g., from the NC ECIDS) could be helpful to analyze. Members of the B-5 NA advisory group will be very familiar with previous work, to help ensure that the current one is conducted efficiently and addresses important gaps to inform our strategic planning process.

**Definition of Children who are Vulnerable or Underserved:** NC defines *vulnerable* children as those a) who live in families with incomes at or below 75% of the state median income, b) who experience multiple adverse child experiences, c) whose families are experiencing homelessness, d) with an identified developmental disability or chronic health condition, or e) those with Limited English Proficiency.

NC defines *underserved* children, generally, as those whose families wish to access services but are not able to do so or as those who are enrolled in lower-quality ECE programs. This general definition is operationalized as a) those families who have requested services but have not yet received them (e.g., on a waiting list); and b) those children enrolled in programs with 1-, 2-, or 3-star rated license. NC defines high quality ECE as a program with a 4- or 5-star rated child care license. Thus, children attending programs with a lower star rated license are not in the highest quality program that could best support their development and learning.

According to the NC Rural Center, 80 of NC's 100 counties are considered rural (i.e., no more than 250 people per square mile using estimates from the 2014 U.S. Census). Forty-one percent

of the state population lives in these counties. Fourteen NC counties (representing about 25% of the population) are considered suburban (i.e., between 250-750 people per square mile), and the remaining six are urban. For the PDG B-5 application, *children living in rural areas* are defined as those living in the 80 rural counties according to the NC Rural Center. All tribes in NC are located in one of these rural counties

### **Analysis of Data Regarding B-5 Services, Including Unduplicated Counts of Children**

**Served and Awaiting Services:** This portion of the B-5 NA will address multiple data needs that are critical to 1) execute NC's long-term vision to improve outcomes for children, 2) measure the number of unduplicated children served by programs, and 3) understand unmet service needs. First, the B-5 NA will support the data needs of the NC ECAP (see Section B). The framework for the NC ECAP includes over 40 quantitative indicators that will be measured annually to track progress towards its 2025 goals. As such, reliable, high-quality, and readily-accessible data sources are needed to ensure that these indicators are accurately measured. Therefore, the B-5 NA will inventory the data sources available for NC ECAP indicators and identify any gaps that need to be addressed, emphasizing the identification of data sources for indicators focused on vulnerable children, such as those facing homelessness. Second, the B-5 NA will support NC's plan to measure the unduplicated number of children served by NC's programs and to understand unmet service needs. The NC ECIDS serves as a single source for data integrated from multiple ECE programs in NC. Today, NC ECIDS can provide unduplicated counts of the number of children served by a subset of education, health, and social services programs. The NA will require hiring a contractor to provide information on the data gaps in NC ECIDS. Specifically, the contractor will start by describing data for programs not currently integrated into the NC ECIDS, identifying gaps, and making

recommendations about data to add from these programs. The contractor will also conduct an inventory of data available to capture the unmet need of children by NC programs, such as the subsidy waitlist information in the DCDEE database. Based on the results, the contractor will make recommendations about how these data can be incorporated into the expansion of NC ECIDS.

In closing, NC has a solid plan to conduct a B-5 NA that will inform its systems-building efforts. We are eligible for **bonus points** in the application because we a) already have an early childhood integrated data system that can provide unduplicated counts of children receiving child care-related services, are being served in the child-welfare system, or are receiving supplemental food services, b) we will expand the programs included in the NC ECIDS, which will improve our ability to provide an unduplicated count of children served, and c) we will review available data (e.g., through the state child care subsidy database) to identify children on the wait list to help us better understand the unmet needs of children in NC.

### Activity 2 – B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan

NC is guided by its vision where all young children get a healthy start and develop to their full potential in safe and nurturing families, schools and communities. With the drafting of the statewide NC ECAP, NC has set explicit goals around early learning: We want to become a state that ensures that all young children experience the conditions they need to build strong brain architecture and school readiness skills that support their success in school and in life. To meet our explicit goals around early learning, and to reach our vision for all children, the state must build and plan strategically to ensure that all children and families have the resources they need and deserve. NC is well situated to develop a strategic plan that builds on work that is already underway in the state, prioritizing collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities across agencies,

organizations and programs. NC recognizes the need to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and well-being, as reflected by the multiple, complimentary efforts underway in the state. With the support of the PDG B-5 Grant, NC will finalize and strengthen its strategic plan to ensure the state's ECE system best meets the needs of young children, particularly our most vulnerable children, and their families by: (1) **Building on existing efforts** to ensure continuity across initiatives, to avoid duplication of work, to amplify common areas of focus, and to focus the state's capital (both human and financial) to bringing shared priorities to fruition. (2) **Engaging Stakeholders Across Systems**, disciplines, agencies, organizations, and geography to co-create and share ownership of its plan. (3) **Leveraging Resources** by partnering across agencies, organizations and systems.

**Building on Existing Efforts:** NC has a proud history of innovation and success in ECE. We were the first state to make full-day kindergarten universally available. We then pioneered the nation's first comprehensive early childhood initiative, Smart Start, to improve the quality of child care, provide access to health screenings, and offer ongoing support to families with young children. We launched NC Pre-K to provide at-risk children with high quality early learning environments. NC was one of the first states to launch a QRIS through its Five-Star Rated license, and is one of the few to embed a QRIS into the process of licensing. Today, 65 percent of NC's ECE programs are at the 4- or 5-star quality rating. Leaders in the state created the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project, which is now a national model to provide early educators with scholarships to obtain higher levels of education. Research demonstrates that NC's investments in Smart Start and NC Pre-K have lasting effects, including higher third grade reading and math scores and fewer special education placements.

At the same time, NC faces significant challenges to ensure that all of its children – particularly its most vulnerable – have the experiences they need to build a strong foundation for healthy development and learning. This is evident in the state’s reading scores, as the majority of NC children are not proficient in reading in fourth grade as measured by the National Assessment on Education Progress. On this measure and on many other outcome measures, there are significant disparities by race, ethnicity and whether or not a student is an English language learner. To address these challenges, complimentary efforts are underway in the state. In 2018, the state began developing the NC ECAP which coalesces and builds upon the birth-to-five strategies in existing efforts outlined above, and will hold the state accountable for achieving progress not only for children ages birth to five, but through third grade. This action plan is built on the premise that a child’s early years will have lifelong physical, social, and emotional impact. The NCDHHS has worked extensively with over 350 stakeholders from across NC, including the ECAC, to develop and create the draft plan. The NC ECAP centers around measurable changes in outcomes in those early years and includes ten data-informed goals. NCDHHS will also engage in dialogue and listening sessions throughout November and December in communities across the state to gather ongoing, targeted feedback. After NCDHHS has reviewed public input on the draft, the Department will coordinate with the ECAC to revise the NC ECAP, including detailed recommendations for statewide and local strategies, for a full release in early 2019.

With the support of the PDG B-5 Grant, NC will build on existing efforts by developing specific actions and a timeline to advance the NC ECAP’s priorities, especially as it relates to the access to early learning-related goals.

**Engaging Stakeholders Across Systems:** NC has a long track record of engaging diverse stakeholders to accomplish bold goals. As a result, we have built an array of engagement

mechanisms that we can readily tap into to ensure the state’s strategic plan is one that truly belongs to its people, and is able to consider how to identify and implement strategies in the NC ECAP.

With the support of the PDG B-5 Grant, NC will engage stakeholders across systems by: **Engaging the Smart Start system**, a network of early childhood organizations that serve all 100 North Carolina counties. This network, overseen by the NCPC, serves as the state’s early childhood infrastructure. In 2017 through 2018, 14 local partnerships each hosted two convenings of ECE professionals to understand the challenges and opportunities that they faced in meeting the needs of young children and families and how the state could best support their success. We will build on this model to ensure that the NC ECAP is responsive to and reflects the priorities of communities. In addition, we will partner with NCPC to engage leaders at the annual National Smart Start Conference held in May. **Prioritizing families:** Through Head Start, Early Head Start, Tribal Head Start, and the Smart Start network, our existing investments in family education and support programs, and community-led efforts, several entities regularly meet with families of young children. We will partner with these groups to host conversations on the opportunities and challenges parents face in supporting their children’s development, what information families need knowledge to exercise choice about our mixed delivery system, and how NC’s ECE system can most effectively support them in their role as their children’s most important teacher. **Prioritizing equity:** The NC ECAP is being developed with a focus on disparities in outcomes in targeted areas where they exist. As a next step, the state will strengthen its focus on vulnerable populations by making equity a statewide priority for its ECE system. The strategic plan will address how equity drives our work as well as how to build the capacity across systems to set and implement equity-related goals that are tied to broader state and local goals and strategies. **Leveraging existing networks and convenings:** Since November 2015, there has been extensive stakeholder engagement through Pathways, which

has brought together hundreds of state and local leaders working across disciplines, sectors, systems, and the political aisle. Together they have co-created and endorsed shared whole-child measures of success, determined where to move to action to first, and developed a strategy for aligned action. To date, 174 diverse leaders representing all aspects of the ECE system have served on Action Teams and hundreds of additional stakeholders have participated in larger meetings, community conversations, and multiple surveys. The state will collaborate with networks such as Pathways to ensure that NC's plan aligns with, honors and partners with existing efforts. Additional opportunities include: The Birth-3 Interagency Council was established by the NC General Assembly and is jointly led by the NCDHHS and DPI. Its charge is to establish a vision and accountability for a birth-through -third-grade system of early education that addresses: standards and assessments data-driven improvement and outcomes, teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness, instruction and environment, transitions and continuity, family engagement, and governance and funding. Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. There are 14 community-led Campaigns for Grade-Level Reading in NC working to mobilize leaders to ensure that more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. It is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, and government agencies. Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). The Council is charged with creating and guiding a bold early childhood action plan that aligns with other efforts to advance the state's early childhood system; building awareness of the importance of high-quality early childhood experiences to future education and career success to ensure young children in NC are learning and thriving; and recommending and advocating for policies and funding that improve equitable access to high-quality ECE services and better outcomes for young children and families. Every Student Succeeds Act District Implementation. The NC Head Start State Collaboration Office has supported early childhood

leaders in collaborating across agencies and with their Education Agency partners to strengthen local ECE systems. Think Babies. *This is a collaborative effort* designed to ensure that NC's young children, ages 0-3, and their families benefit from effective public policies, programs and funding that promote a solid foundation for healthy beginnings, supported families, and quality ECE experiences.

**Leveraging Resources:** With the support of the PDG B-5 Grant, NC will leverage resources by: Coordinating with the NCECF to establish an early childhood data development strategy aligned to both the goals outlined throughout the NC ECAP, data priorities already established in NC ECIDS, and through the work of Pathways. Through the work of Pathways, the state has identified shared, population-level, whole-child measures as indicators for children's optimal development. The NC General Assembly and the Governor have incorporated the measures into authorizing language for efforts to create an aligned early childhood system. NC collects excellent, high-quality data on many of these measures. On other measures, however, the state has only low-quality data, data that cannot be disaggregated, or no data at all. In addition, for more complex measures, such as children's social-emotional health and readiness for kindergarten, there is no one agreed-upon measure in place. The state will partner with the NCECF to develop a strategy to 1) improve the collection and analysis of data on the shared measures and 2) engage in a supported process to convene experts, review research and best practices, and make recommendations for what measure – or portfolio of proxy measures – would best track children's outcomes at kindergarten entry. This work has begun at NCECF through funding received from The Duke Endowment and can be expanded through the support of the PDG B-5 Grant.

**Finalize and Strengthen North Carolina's Strategic Plan:** NC, through the PDG B-5 Grant, will employ the approaches described above to create a strategic plan that will serve as a road

map for the state for improving services for children and families. NC's strategic plan will incorporate two areas: (1) Conducting a broad analysis of data access across the early childhood system; and (2) Planning for the implementation of strategies in the NC ECAP.

We will undertake a process that engages a broad array of stakeholders including an intentional focus on families and communities and that builds on the work of both the NC ECAP and other efforts underway in the state. Our strategic planning process and final product will be rooted in a collaborative approach that leverages the strengths of multiple agencies and organizations to improve quality in early care and education experiences, enhance coordination at both the state and local level for seamless transitions for children, and ensure that families are at the center of our work, and that they have the knowledge they need for making decisions about how to best support their children's healthy development. The strategic plan will reflect NC's vision for young children and will specify the actions that we will take to achieve that vision and the measures that we will use to be held accountable.

To leverage work that has already been done that has primed the state for a strategic plan, the state will contract with the NCECF to build on Pathways work, which serves as the foundation for the metrics the state will use for its strategic plan. By enhancing the work that has been undertaken by NCECF over the last years, the state will benefit from their track record developing an engaged network that the state can tap into, rather than creating a new process. They have unique expertise and a track record in convening NC's leaders to achieve consensus, make decisions, and collectively endorse and promote the outcome.

Because NCECF conducted the research and developed and led the process to establish the metrics the state plan is based upon, the organization is already steeped in the data allowing them to move immediately into implementation of the work and saving resources. In addition, NCECF

received a grant from The Duke Endowment to undertake a portion of this work in 2019. The state will maximize its resources and avoid duplicating efforts by building on this existing effort. Furthermore, NCECF has created a feedback loop with communities and Smart Start local partnerships across NC - reaching hundreds of people - that can be accessed for the state's strategic plan development. And it has a network of highly engaged leaders from across the early childhood system - the same leaders that the state will need to engage to develop its strategic plan. Rather than recreate this network, the state will benefit from leveraging these existing investments. The plan itself will be written by staff from the NCDHHS, using the data, analysis and community engagement work from the NCECF.

### **Activity 3 – Maximizing Parent Knowledge and Choice**

In May 2016, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) released a joint policy statement that declared “Strong family engagement in early childhood systems and programs is central – not supplemental – to promoting children’s healthy, intellectual, physical, and social-emotional development; preparing children for school; and supporting academic achievement in elementary school and beyond”. In NC’s mixed delivery system, the depth of requirements and the level of implementation related to family engagement are not consistent or coordinated, and many programs continue to struggle to successfully engage families and to provide timely and accurate information in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. A more systematic and coordinated approach to family engagement and to providing needed information to families will help ensure the best possible outcomes for children.

**Description:** This activity includes four strategies at both state and local levels, to maximize knowledge about the B-5 system; parental choice; and family engagement in programs, their

children's development, and transition into elementary school. Strategies include: (1) Creating a NC family engagement leadership team to develop or adopt a shared cross-sector family engagement framework and develop a strategic plan for statewide implementation and scale-up. (2) Providing support to local communities to improve and promote family engagement across systems including training, technical assistance and coaching, along with grants to improve and promote family engagement to serve as a model for statewide dissemination. (3) Expanding the NC Resource Platform to include the mixed delivery system. (4) Expanding existing, innovative approaches to family engagement and information sharing to improve family knowledge about their child and available services. A state-level Family Engagement Coordinator will oversee all strategies within this activity and will work in partnership with staff at NCPC who will help to support the family engagement leadership team and will work with the local communities.

**Activity 3.1: NC Family Engagement Leadership Team:** NC will create a family engagement leadership team to develop or adopt a shared cross-sector family engagement framework, including the development of guiding principles and a plan for statewide implementation and scale-up. To ensure collaboration and coordination across the ECE system, the team will include families and representatives across the birth to five mixed delivery system including, but not limited to, Title 1, Preschool Exceptional Children and the Head Start State Collaboration Office at the DPI; NC Pre-K, child care subsidy and child care licensing; MIECHV, child welfare, WIC, early intervention, along with Smart Start, other non-profit statewide organizations prioritizing family engagement, and UNC-TV Public Media North Carolina. The leadership team will also explore the creation of a State Parent Advisory Group.

The family engagement strategic plan will support implementation of the framework and will promote alignment across systems. *The strategic plan will prioritize activities for engaging*

*families in their child's well-being, development, education and transition; increasing knowledge and access of available services for families while promoting parent choice in those services. It will build upon and inform current state activities related to collaboration and coordination in home visiting, transition to elementary school and local district ESSA planning. It will also better support family engagement coordination across the mixed delivery system. The leadership team will provide support and guidance to coordinate and align systems to engage parents and families in learning about their child's development and transitions.*

**Activity 3.2: Local Communities Improve and Promote Family Engagement:** To inform the work of the leadership team, up to eight local community planning initiatives will be supported by the project. They will be supported to: (1) enhance ongoing relationships between agencies providing services to children and families such as child care and Head Start, home visiting, child welfare; (2) leverage programs' expertise in family engagement and parenting education by sharing information and successful practices across agencies; (3) leverage local resources to support partnerships and services for children and families; and (4) develop a community action plan for a shared family-centered approach to ensure that families know about services and are a part of planning and decision making. The plan will also ensure that families are meaningfully engaged in an ongoing manner, beyond the life of this grant.

Communities will be selected based on their ability to demonstrate readiness to collaborate with key ECE and family-serving organizations to plan and pilot capacity-building strategies for a family-centered approach to reaching families, including fathers, and parents whose home language is not English.

The selected communities will receive training on the family engagement framework and the use of a systems approach to community planning, individualized TA and monthly cross-county

meetings for training and peer learning. These meetings will also facilitate discussion between the state and local planning groups to inform work at both levels. Based on the adopted framework and action plan, training and implementation materials for state and local stakeholders will be developed, including a community toolkit, which will expand the impact of this activity statewide.

The family engagement leadership team and local community initiatives will also *inform activities to ensure parents and families receive timely, accurate information in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner* about the variety, quality, access, and affordability of ECE programs. Leaders will utilize a *no wrong door approach* and work closely with families to determine how best to provide information to families. This means that families should be able to find the information they need in multiple places. To ensure that families have access to information, the NC Resource Platform will be expanded to better serve families with young children.

**Activity 3.3: The NC Resource Platform:** Stakeholders from across the state have voiced the desire to better support children and families by working in partnership with each other. Many cited the need for a web-based platform that would unite different organizations in a person-centered way to best support children and families. As a result, NC is creating the NC Resource Platform—a new statewide tool to make it easier for community-based organizations, health care providers, insurers and other partners to connect people with the community resources they need to thrive. The platform is a public-private partnership with numerous stakeholders providing the necessary resources to build the platform. Roll out began in October 2018 and the platform will be available statewide by 2020. The PDG B-5 Grant provides an opportunity for early education

agencies to be a part of the NC Resource Platform, thereby *providing increased opportunities to maximize parent choice and knowledge about existing programs and providers.*

NC will target the NC Resource Platform to early education agencies (child care sites, subsidy administrators, Pre-K contractors, consultants, etc.), through a pilot in several counties. This includes: *ensuring ECE agencies are listed in the resource database* so families and partner agencies (e.g. health care providers, insurers and others) have access to comprehensive information about these programs for children, *on-boarding of ECE agencies, providing ECE agencies with a software license* to use the Platform, and *providing requisite initial and ongoing training* for those who are on-boarded onto the Platform.

The NC Resource Platform will connect ECE providers and partners to each other, as well as to the network of resources available to support the diverse needs of children and their families. This tool will help providers link families to the full range of services-- across food, transportation, interpersonal safety, employment, and housing—that they need. In addition, it will provide information on referral outcomes which will be used to understand the needed resources in the community, the outcomes of individuals using it, barriers to receiving services, and other information necessary to improving the health, safety, and well-being of the children and families served across NC.

#### **Activity 3.4: Expand existing, innovative approaches to family engagement and**

**information sharing**: NC also plans to engage in innovative approaches to family engagement through a partnership with the state’s PBS affiliate, UNC-TV Public Media NC. Accessible and recognized by over 3.8 million NC households, UNC-TV Public Media NC already has educational services extending beyond broadcast and digital resources. Partnering with the eight community planning initiatives, UNC-TV Public Media NC will assist in hosting events aimed at

deepening engagement with families across the state, specifically those who are under-served, with free hands-on learning activities, demonstrations supported by community partners, as well as PBS KIDS education resources. Events will also provide opportunities to sign up for *Bright By Text*, UNC-TV Public Media NC's early learning text service for parents and caregivers. *Bright By Text* will be used to provide free text messages containing parenting information and child care resources *directly to mothers, fathers and caregivers of children birth to five in their native language*. A letter of agreement from UNC-TV Public Media NC has been received.

In addition, state level websites, brochures, and other materials will be adapted and updated to ensure they are best able to provide resources appropriate for the families who need them. One strategy will include *translating materials into more languages* as well as providing information according to community preferences, such as the use of flyers, phone calls or text messages.

Finally, materials will be updated to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Local communities will be supported to provide information to families based on their preferences.

Exploration of other opportunities for partnering with existing state and local projects who engage families in innovative and successful ways will also occur.

This combination of state and local strategies will ensure that families have information about the B-5 system and their children's development *and* are meaningfully engaged in programs – and the communication structures will ensure that local efforts influence state-level policy and practice.

#### Activity 4 – Sharing Best Practices

**Description:** Because of innovation in counties and continuous system improvement efforts by state-level ECE partners, there are a number of opportunities in NC to share best practices among ECE providers. This PDG B-5 activity will include three strategies: (1) mentoring to expand

universal enrollment processes; (2) supporting transitions from preschool to kindergarten; and (3) and sharing and aligning data to promote data-informed decision making.

**Activity 4.1: Universal Enrollment:** DCDEE oversees the local administration of the state's NC Pre-K program and provides TA to its NC Pre-K contractors on program requirements, such as eligibility determination. While NC Pre-K has standard statewide eligibility requirements for the program, a few NC Pre-K contractors have developed a universal application and enrollment process for four-year-old children in their counties that is used with other programs, such as subsidized child care, Head Start, and Title I. With universal enrollment, these contractors are better able to link families to these services without requiring them to apply separately for different programs.

Recognizing that this is a *best practice for coordinating effective service delivery*, DCDEE invited three contractors - Durham's Partnership for Children, Onslow County Partnership for Children, and Wake County Smart Start – to share their expertise with other contractors wishing to develop a universal enrollment process. The three agencies have agreed to partner with other contractors over an estimated 6-9 months to coach them in this process. The mentoring contractors will help support the others' efforts to bring local partners together, such as the department of social services, public schools, and Head Start, to determine how best to implement universal enrollment in their communities.

At the end of the grant period the mentored contractors will have a universal application and enrollment process ready to implement for four-year-old children across multiple programs.

DCDEE will seek information from the participating contractors for lessons learned in establishing universal enrollment in their communities, to identify strategies that may be replicated by other contractors, and to determine whether the universal application process also

helped connect families to services for their younger children. DCDEE will provide a \$10,000 stipend through this grant for each of the three contract mentors, to cover their costs of staff time and travel and allow for an incentive for participation. DCDEE has received a signed third party letter of agreement from Durham's Partnership for Children, Onslow County Partnership for Children, and Wake County Smart Start.

**Activity 4.2: Supporting Transitions from Preschool to Kindergarten:** DCDEE, in consultation with DPI, has been working to implement strategies to support transitions from preschool to kindergarten. As a foundation for this work, a *collaborative, state-level team* comprised of staff from DCDEE, including staff from the NC Pre-K Program, and DPI's Office of Early Learning, Exceptional Children, Title I programs, and the Head Start State Collaboration office, was created. The team reviewed national research on preschool to kindergarten transition practices and conducted field surveys and held focus groups with parents and teachers to assess the types of preschool to kindergarten transition activities happening in local communities to develop a deeper understanding of gaps or unmet needs. Overall, the survey and focus group results demonstrated that, while there are some transition practices occurring in some communities, those efforts are limited and inconsistently implemented across the state. In addition, they did not address the need for sharing child-specific information between preschool and kindergarten teachers. A Phase I pilot with children enrolled in the NC Pre-K program in three counties has worked to improve transition practices. The PDG B-5 Grant provides an opportunity for NC to enhance and expand its efforts to improve transitions using the lessons learned in the Phase I pilot.

Some of the lessons learned in the Phase I pilot include the importance of tools to support communication between Pre-K and kindergarten teachers; the importance of giving families a

way to provide information about their child to the kindergarten teacher; the importance of providing training on the transition model and providing coaching for teachers to use the transition data they receive; and the necessity for a way to transfer data from Pre-K to kindergarten. Building on these lessons this PDG B-5 Grant activity will develop a transition toolkit; provide training and mentoring to Pre-K and kindergarten teachers; seek ongoing feedback from participants and families regarding the process and the usefulness of the information that is shared; pilot the Transition Planning Template made up of best practices for transition; and explore the development of an electronic data system or the enhancement of a system to capture and share child information and developmental assessment data from the Pre-K classroom to public school.

Doing this work well will require a transition coordinator (TC) to manage the overall project and ensure that processes are developed to appropriately share Pre-K student data with kindergarten teachers. The TC will be instrumental in addressing the challenges of cross sector planning by creating a toolkit to help local communities develop transition plans. Finally, as the state attempts to scale the methods of documenting child information and sharing results, the TC will be instrumental in supporting the process and materials that could be used in all ECE programs to establish transition plans.

**Activity 4.3: Enhance NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System (NC ECIDS):** Effective and intentional data sharing enables ECE stakeholders to make collaborative, data-informed decisions about programs and services, and the policies that govern them. NC will engage in several activities to *promote sharing and alignment of ECE data*, including: partnering with stakeholders to establish alignment on home visiting metrics, expanding data available in NC ECIDS by adding K-3rd grade outcomes and readiness data, building a more user-friendly online

platform for NC ECIDS to promote data use at the state and local level, and conducting a survey of key ECE data users to align ECE data priorities across the state.

First, NC will collaborate with home visiting (HV) program leaders and stakeholders, the NC Home Visiting Consortium, and Child Trends (in coordination with their ongoing initiative State-level Home Visiting Integration with NC ECIDS, SHINE), to *align HV indicators across the state*. Currently, data are stored and managed in separate data systems, and the required data collection activities differ by HV program, limiting the state's ability to know the total number of children reached by these services across programs. Further, HV data are not currently linked to other early childhood services, preventing the state from understanding the true impact of the full range of existing services, or being able to compare the services in a meaningful way. NC will convene program stakeholders from various HV programs to better align data collection practices, metrics, and data system characteristics. A contractor would support through the SHINE initiative the process of alignment by providing TA to build data linking capacity across programs and towards an eventual integration of aligned data with NC ECIDS. NC ECIDS currently integrates data across multiple other childhood services, across different agencies serving young children and their families. By working towards alignment of metrics and integration of HV data with other early childhood services, NC will be able to understand the shared value of these programs and strengthen our ability to provide an unduplicated count of children served.

Second, *NC will expand NC ECIDS by integrating early education outcomes data with the current system*. NC ECIDS currently provides data for children receiving subsidized child care assistance, child welfare services, services for children with identified disabilities, NC Pre-K, and supplemental food and nutrition services. However, to better understand the impact of these

services on children, these data must be tied to child outcomes data. Specifically, by integrating current ECIDS data with early education outcomes data, researchers and early childhood stakeholders will be able to analyze the association between services and ECE outcomes and experiences, such as expulsion rates, reading proficiency levels, end of grade assessment data, and school quality ratings. NCDHHS will collaborate with DPI, which manages NC's K-12 outcomes data, to integrate these data with the current NC ECIDS. NCDHHS will also use PDG-B-5 funding to export Head Start data from Child Plus into ECIDS.

Third, *NC will enhance the capacity of the current online web platform for NC ECIDS to make publically-available aggregate data more accessible and immediately relevant to the public*, which will promote greater use of NC ECIDS by state and local stakeholders. In turn, greater data usage will increase the number of data-informed decisions that stakeholders are able to make and will allow for a wider use of data in non-high-stakes efforts. Currently, NC ECIDS provides a web platform that offers a handful of aggregate-level data PDF reports that can be individually downloaded by public users. However, data are not provided in an easily accessible manner that holistically conveys the value of the data. NC will hire a contractor with expertise in web design and data visualization to improve the accessibility of the valuable data that NC ECIDS offers. The contractor will assist by enhancing the web platform with impactful data visualization, including county-level data maps and data dashboards, and in developing more robust and meaningful downloadable reports.

Fourth, *NC will conduct through a contractor a survey of key ECE data users*, which include state and local agencies, researchers, policy makers, teachers, and other members of the public. The survey will seek to answer key questions to understand: 1) the primary state-level data sources used by ECE stakeholders today, 2) the purposes for which ECE data are currently used,

3) the current unmet data needs that ECE data users in NC continue to face. Based on the findings from this survey, the contractor will formulate formal recommendations for the state to consider in setting an aligned data strategy for the state across multiple ECE initiatives.

These activities share best practices (e.g., universal enrollment, transition supports, use of data to inform decisions) within the ECE system, relying on a mix of local and state TA to do so.

### Activity 5 – Improving Overall Quality

For Activity 5, NC is proposing a strategic investment in the NC Babies First (NCB1) program that has been successfully piloted through RTT-ELC, but not yet expanded. This research-based approach to infant and toddler care will help shape the way for NC and other states to target high-quality early education experiences for our youngest children that will have lasting impacts. This project is a priority because we know that many of our state’s infants and toddlers have poor or mediocre experiences in child care settings creating greater risk for poor outcomes long-term (*Who’s Caring for Our Babies* report, 2017, Child Care Services Association (CCSA)). Further, extensive research on early brain development has shown that investments in the first three years are critical, especially for young children with high needs.

**Description:** We estimate implementing Activity 5 for five months that will remain in the grant year after approval of our B-5 NA and Strategic Plan. (See previous sections and timeline).

These five months will lay the groundwork for NC’s continued focus on providing high-quality ECE for our most vulnerable infants and toddlers.

NC’s QRIS provides the foundation for building this strategy. The NCB1 program will be targeted in the PDG B-5 grant year to center-based, 5-star ECE settings in areas of the state with the greatest need for high quality infant and toddler care not currently served by Early Head

Start. Five-star programs have shown their commitment to quality through their achievement of this highest QRIS level and are best primed to take the next step to meeting higher standards.

Oversight of the NCB1 program will be provided by CCSA's existing Statewide Infant Toddler Project Manager and an Infant Toddler Advisory Committee. Program requirements will be based on infant and toddler research-based and evidence-based practice recommendations (e.g., the Program for Infant Toddler Care; NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development; and Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). An Infant Toddler Advisory Committee will be convened to further inform guideline development and assist in outreach activities. Members will include representation from entities such as Regional Resource & Referral Lead Agencies, Infant Toddler Specialists, Medical and Mental Health Professionals and DCDEE consultants.

The primary goal is to increase access to high quality, center-based early learning programs for families with infants, one- and two-year olds. This will be achieved by providing: (1) High quality technical assistance to classroom teachers and administrators on a weekly basis from a highly qualified infant-toddler specialist; (2) Increased family support and engagement activities; (3) Developmental screenings for infants and toddlers using the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE with referral for further services as necessary; (4) Support for the infant toddler workforce with improved compensation, scheduled planning times, supportive administrators providing time to work with NCB1 Infant Toddler Specialists and release time for additional professional development. NCB1 staff will support teachers utilizing T.E.A.C.H. to increase their education. A one-time bonus to supplement teacher salaries will be given to degreed teachers not currently receiving a salary supplement from another source. (5) Support for site administrators through an Administrator's Academy with other NCB1 site administrators. Understanding the additional

responsibilities to site administrators, the project will provide a stipend paid to administrators as milestones are achieved throughout the project. This stipend is a one-time bonus paid directly to administrators recognizing the low pay and exceptional responsibility resting on their shoulders.

(6) Teachers in each classroom will be provided with a year-long subscription to My Teachstone, an online CLASS™ portal housing suggested resources based on observed scores. The Infant Toddler Specialist will use this portal to input observation scores, create improvement plans, suggest resources to classroom teachers, and monitor use of these resources to help guide learning and growth. Using stepped incentives based on goal attainment, programs will be rewarded and able to reinvest funds to continue quality improvements.

Key staff includes (1) four Infant Toddler Specialists (ITS) to work with up to eight classrooms to support quality improvement and coordination with local and regional resource and referral agencies. (2) The existing project manager of the statewide Infant Toddler Quality Enhancement project will oversee the project and direct the ITS work. (3) Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services, provided through contract services, will provide a broad range of services including early childhood mental health consultation in classrooms and through home visits; training and coaching staff; screening, assessment and referral services; promotion and marketing of group services; and providing parent trainings.

It is critical that administrators and teachers serving infants and toddlers understand the major role they play in helping families engage in their children's education at an early age.

Developing strong family engagement that builds relationships, focuses on cultural awareness and inclusivity, and invites families to be active and equal partners with their children's teachers sets the stage for life-long engagement. NCB1 will align and coordinate with the NC Family Engagement Leadership Team as described in this proposal and will use the *Head Start Parent*

*Family, and Community Engagement Framework* as a guide for developing the NCB1 family engagement strategies. To incentivize family engagement, funds will provide such things as educational toys/books.

Implementation of this 5-month activity will also inform the development of a *longitudinal evaluation project* to examine NCB1 effectiveness. The Infant Toddler Advisory Committee will also continue to ensure top priorities are maintained. State, federal and private funding will be needed to implement the model that includes intensive service and financial supports. If funding is not received from this grant for future years, the state could use private, state or federal quality dollars to continue to provide supports to programs.

NC has invested in the high-quality NC Pre-K program for fifteen years. NCB1 is the best next step in the state's commitment to ensuring high quality early care and learning for infants and toddlers. We are confident that we can begin this activity during the eighth month of the grant and use the full five months to support programs and help them better serve infants and toddlers.

#### **D. Organizational Capacity and Management**

**Responsibilities and Roles of Lead Agency's Staff and Partners:** DCDEE proposes to manage the PDG B-5 Grant while collaborating with its ECE partners. DCDEE has a history of successful leadership in the early childhood system and extensive experience in cross-agency collaboration to improve outcomes for young children. While some specific partners are not yet specified pending procurement processes, there will likely be public and private partners with roles in implementing PDG B-5 activities. Public partners include the NCDHHS and DPI. Within NCDHHS, DCDEE works closely with other agencies providing services to children and families to develop the NC ECAP that includes a goal related to increased access to high quality

ECE. NCDHHS will likely be involved with development of the PDG B-5 statewide strategic plan since it will be guided by and aligned with the NC ECAP to support children's learning; and in the efforts to increase data sharing across the ECE system through NC ECIDS, described in the *Mixed Delivery System*. DPI will likely be involved in grant activities that furthers family engagement and strengthens children's transition to public school. Private partners, such as the NC CCR&R system and NCPC will likely be involved to implement family engagement activities and in strategies to share best practices. NCPC will also provide matching funds from Smart Start activities that will support PDG B-5 family engagement activities.

**DCDEE and Partner Experience:** DCDEE and its partners have sufficient experience and expertise to successfully complete the grant activities, as noted in the *Mixed Delivery System* section. These connections and capabilities will support the effective management of PDG B-5 funded activities. Since DCDEE oversees child care regulation, the QRIS, NC Pre-K, and subsidized child care, effective service delivery policies are aligned to support children and families across programs. DCDEE's partners are also well positioned to successfully complete grant activities. Within NCDHHS, NC ECIDS provides integrated data across multiple early childhood programs administered by NCDHHS and DPI, allowing for a better understanding of children who receive multiple services. DPI's Office of Early Learning (OEL) has extensive experience and expertise in overseeing the Preschool Exceptional Children's Program, Title I Preschool, and the NC Head Start State Collaboration Office, and has successful implementation of ESSA activities. DCDEE and DPI have collaborated in developing *Foundations*, and also in efforts to embed these standards across ECE programs and workforce education. DCDEE and the OEL are now working together on strategies for successful transition of children from the state's NC Pre-K program to kindergarten. NCPC has over 25 years of experience in developing

local infrastructure and systems, ensuring accountability for community level outcomes, and building private sector support. The NC CCR&R system has extensive experience in local delivery of core CCR&R services and statewide initiatives to enhance the quality of infant-toddler care and to promote healthy social behaviors in ECE programs. In addition to service delivery, the CCR&R system provides valuable information on local needs and successful strategies.

**Evidence of Experience, Expertise, and Collaboration:** DCDEE's public-private partnerships in the ECE system provide valuable infrastructure for implementing services at the local level, as may be needed for PDG B-5 funded activities. Shared governance and accountability for ECE services across programs in NC have resulted in a strong framework for services that has continued regardless of changes in state or local leadership. DCDEE's director is a key participant in the ECAC. One area of focus for the ECAC is creating and guiding the NC ECAP that aligns with other efforts to advance the state's ECE system. DCDEE can work with the ECAC to incorporate PDG B-5 strategic planning into the state's action plan for coordinated efforts. DCDEE also works closely with the B-3 Interagency Council, a state governance group led jointly by NCDHHS and DPI to establish a vision and accountability for ECE. DCDEE's director serves on the Child Well-Being Transformation Council, a state group to coordinate public services for children. Supporting children's transition to kindergarten is an area of focus for these groups, which can guide PDG B-5 activities. DCDEE regularly engages with private foundations working to enhance ECE. This includes Pathways (see Section B). Another effort underway is with the Pritzker Children's Initiative, which is guided by the goal that all at-risk infants and toddlers will have access to high quality early childhood development resources,

increasing their likelihood of success in school and life. NC is one of the states receiving Pritzker resources and supports, and DCDEE is a member of the leadership team (see Section B).

**Evidence of Capacity to Administer Grant Funds:** DCDEE’s effective implementation of other federal grants provides assurance of its ability to manage the PDG B-5. DCDEE’s fiscal and administrative capacity is further detailed in the *Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds*. DCDEE has been the lead agency for NC’s CCDF since its inception and oversees administration of CCDF quality funds as well as the subsidized child care program. All activities funded are focused on supporting the quality of the ECE system statewide, such as support for ECE educators, NC’s QRIS, and parent outreach. DCDEE includes stakeholders in the development of the state CCDF Plan, and DCDEE’s partners are involved in delivering services funded by CCDF. DCDEE also successfully managed North Carolina’s Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT-ELC) from 2012-2016. The \$69.9 million grant resulted in linkages among DCDEE, DPH, DPI, and NCPC, as well as many university, community college, local and nonprofit agency partners statewide. This description of DCDEE’s public and private collaborations, involvement in ECE planning and governance, and extensive experience in service delivery and grant management will provide assurance that DCDEE and its partners have sufficient knowledge, experience, and capabilities to successfully implement and manage the PDG B-5 Grant

## E. Timeline

NC PDG B-5 Proposal timeline	Year 1 Jan-Dec 2019 Quarters			
	1	2	3	4
<b>Activity One: Needs Assessment</b>				
Contractor in place	X			
Kick-off meeting; Advisory group established	X			
Regular meetings with NA team, DCDEE, and advisory group	X	X	X	X
Review of previous needs assessments	X	X		
New data collection (e.g., focus groups		X		
Alternative cost methodology work	X	X		
Data needs assessment	X	X		
Report			X	
<b>Activity Two: Strategic Plan</b>				
Contract in place with NC Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF)	X			
Regular meetings with SP team, DCDEE, and NCECF	X	X	X	X
Strategic Plan developed			X	
<b>Activity Three: Maximizing Parent Knowledge, Engagement, and Choice</b>				
NC creates state agency family engagement leadership team to develop or adopt a family engagement framework and strategic plan for statewide implementation and scale-up.	X			
Develop a shared vision, policies and practices about family engagement across multiple state agencies.	X			
Provide support to local communities to improve and promote family engagement across systems including training, technical assistance and coaching along with grants to improve and promote family engagement.		X	X	X
NC develops or enhances strategic partnerships that already connect strongly with families to provide them content about NC services, resources and child development for families with young children.		X	X	X
Translate existing information for parents into different languages and other communications updates for accessibility.			X	X
The state will have improved/aligned/coordinated systems for engaging families in their child's development, education and transition across the birth to grade three continuum.				X
<b>Activity Four: Sharing Best Practice</b>				
Spread local efforts for a single portal for enrollment. Work with Wake, Durham, and Onslow.	X	X	X	X

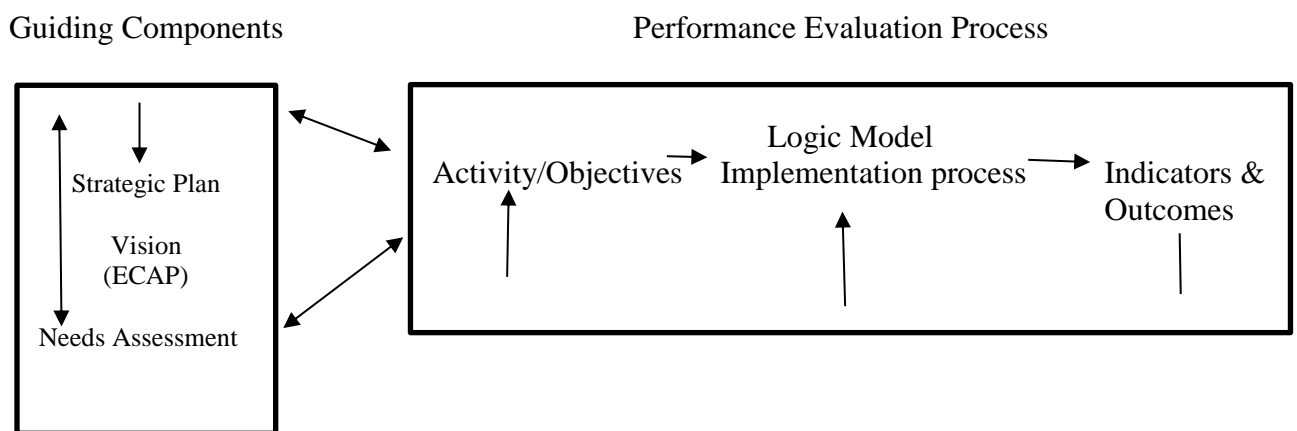
NC PDG B-5 Proposal timeline	Year 1 Jan-Dec 2019 Quarters			
	1	2	3	4
Create a statewide Transitions Coordinator to support start-up and alignment of state and local transition activities.	X	X	X	X
Enhance NC ECIDS: Enhance its functionality and expand into 1 new area (e.g., Home Visiting, Vital records, Medicaid, K-12). Data Sharing and Alignment				
Contractors in place	X			
Home visiting stakeholder meetings and data alignment work		X	X	X
Development work – integration of DPI early education data into NC ECIDS		X	X	X
Development work – data visualization and report enhancements on NC ECIDS online platform		X	X	X
Development and distribution of survey of early childhood data users		X	X	
Synthesis and analysis of data user survey results			X	X
Development of recommendations and findings from data user survey			X	X
<b>Activity Five: Improving Overall Quality NCB1 Project</b>				
Assemble the Infant Toddler Advisory Committee			X	
Hire, Train and Orient NCB1 Staff			X	X
Author NCB1 Policies, Procedures and Recruitment Guidelines			X	X
Develop the NCB1 Database			X	X
Coordinate Start-up Fund Purchases including curriculum, child assessment and classroom materials			X	X
Train NCB1 classroom teachers and administrators			X	X
Provide incentives as programmatic milestones/deliverables are achieved			X	X
Design short term and long term evaluation plan				X
Collect program data and pre/posttests (as applicable) and summarize as appropriate				X
<b>Program Performance Evaluation (PPE) Plan</b>				
Revise PPE with technical assistance; flesh out recording plans and put in place	X			
Develop and issue Request for Proposal for contract evaluation	X			
Select Contract and process through DHHS		X		
Contractor helps tweak evaluation and begins plan of work			X	
Evaluation process continues with regular feedback to implementation teams			X	X
Begin to develop long-term evaluation plans			X	X
Final Report– Year 1				X

## F. Program Performance Evaluation Plan

The purpose of the Program Performance Evaluation (PPE) plan is to ensure that the program goals and activities are leading to the desired outcomes and contribute to continuous quality improvement. The proposed PPE plan reflects the project logic model fully described in Section G below. The logic model, in turn, reflects the vision and goals articulated in NC's ECAP. The B-5 NA and Strategic Plan will further shape the PPE plan. The design will be refined upon completion of the B-5 NA and Strategic Plan described in Activities 1 (p.13) and 2 (p.19).

**Refinement of the Logic Model:** As the project progresses and evaluation data are available, it is likely that findings from the evaluation as well as the B-5 NA and Strategic Plan will suggest changes to the current logic model. While the Strategic Plan and B-5 NA help shape the Logic Model, the activities described in the Logic Model may also inform revisions to the B-5 NA and Strategic Plan.

The diagram below illustrates the bi-directional feedback loops between the Logic Model and the B-5 NA and Strategic Plan.



**Evaluation Methodology:** The PPE can best be described as a mixed model approach. The B-5 activities and strategies vary widely and require several approaches to data collection and analysis. The evaluation process for specific activities will follow the process outlined here:



Given the focus on the B-5 NA and the Activities of Year 1, the PPE will be primarily a formative evaluation, incorporating summative data for short-term outputs and outcomes as feasible and appropriate. Outputs/outcomes for this first year might include metrics like activities completed, numbers served/participating, as well as focus group and survey findings for specific activities. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and used to determine how well the activities are being implemented, as well as their success.

An outside evaluator, with assistance from program staff, will collect all relevant data for each activity. The data will come from interviews, focus groups, surveys of participants (e.g., ECE staff and families), or similar strategies to fully understand implementation and outcomes of activities. The evaluator will analyze these data and summarize findings about the successes and struggles in implementing strategies; progress toward meeting goals; costs; and outcomes.

**Revision of the PPE.** The focus of the PPE will be on Activities 1-5, with revision of the Logic Model and Strategic Plan as the implementation moves forward. After a grant award, the PPE will be reviewed and revised with the help of offered federal technical assistance. Final tweaks could be made after engaging a third-party contractor. Revision to the PPE will reflect revisions of the Strategic Plan and Logic Model and will include findings from the B-5 NA as available.

**Future Evaluation Design Work:** While the PPE for Year 1 is underway, work on a longer-term evaluation plan will begin for future years. The Strategic Plan will incorporate plans for future evaluation. The B-5 NA will be refined to be an ongoing tool to help evaluate the state's work and needs.

**Incorporating Information from the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan:** A complete description of the B-5 NA is included in Activity 1 and development of the Strategic Plan in Activity 2. Extensive work assessing needs in several areas of the ECE system has been completed in recent years and will inform the work of this B-5 NA. As the B-5 NA proceeds, gaps in data and new data needed will be a key piece of the work. Recommendation for additional types of data and/or changes to data systems will be part of the B-5 NA.

Data collected through the B-5 NA will be shared with all aspects of the grant implementation for any implications there may be for revising implementation activities and evaluation data collection (e.g., additional data to be collected or new data needed). The evaluation will reflect the extent to which data from the B-5 NA or direction from the Strategic Plan inform the ongoing work of the specific Activities 3-5.

**Data Sources/Systems:** *Data Sources Currently Available.* The state has several data systems that will be helpful in monitoring progress and achievements/outcomes for this project. The NC Accounting System (NCAS) is detailed and extensive and will allow the budget for each individual activity to be closely tracked. DCDEE tracks amounts budgeted and spent for grant activities via internal spreadsheets and the NCAS. DCDEE will set up a new fund code for the grant that will be used by the Controller's office to encumber and pay grant expenses in NCAS. DCDEE can set up cost centers to drill down to track expenditures of specific activities within the grant fund code.

While individual activities may have their own strategies for participant feedback, Qualtrics can be used by DCDEE to obtain programmatic feedback. It offers a secure data survey feedback system that can be used to survey training participants, ECE providers, teachers, etc.

Other partners in the PDG B-5 proposal have data systems that will support proposed activities, including CCR&R (NACCRAware), NCPC, including the Community Early Childhood Profile (child well-being indicators), Smart Start's programmatic reporting system (outputs/outcomes for community strategies implemented), and NCPC accounting system.

There are data systems for program services and children served, which may be used to varying extents during Year 1 of planning and beginning implementation. They include the NC ECIDS, Regulatory Data (extensive data of providers of early care and education, facilities, age groups served, etc.), Subsidy (payments as well as center information), Child Protective Service data, Supplemental Nutrition Program, IDEA Parts B and C.

*New Data Sources.* The B-5 NA may identify new data needed to better determine the status of children in the state. We expect to further enhance NC ECIDS (Activity 4.3) based on feedback from the B-5 NA and project activities. A new database will be part of the longer-term plans for Activity 4.3 to monitor implementation, improvement, and track funding and payments.

Activity 3.3 includes a new NC Resource Platform, a statewide person-centered, integrated resource database, website, call center, and care coordination platform for families, child care providers, social workers, healthcare providers, and others to connect people to the community resources they need. It will allow for the tracking of system-wide outcomes and support system improvement.

Other data needs likely will be identified as planning and implementation on the various activities move forward. These needs will be built into the revised activities, the Strategic Plan and Needs Assessment as appropriate.

**Program Activities, Implementation, and Measures:** Each of the sections in the Application contain specific detail about the proposed objectives, key activities, sources of data and the like. Due to space limitations of the FOA, this table reflects that information in brief, using selected or sample key components to convey how the activities, data, metrics and responsible and collaborating parties relate. Revision of the PPE after award will include a detailed listing of objectives activities, metrics, and deliverables.

Objective/ Activity	Key Activities	Measures/Sources of Data	Results/Deliverable	Responsible & Collaborating Parties
Activity 1: Needs Assessment				
	Determine unduplicated number of children served & estimate unduplicated number still unserved	NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System	Numbers & percentages reported by programs	Multi-disciplinary NA Advisory Group  Contract Consultant
	Identify quality & availability of ECE services, including gaps in quality & availability	DCDEE Regulatory database; CCR&R data	Data for quality reported by state level; county; setting type; age group; geography; income; shift of care	
	Identify barriers to providing high-quality ECE services (including facility	Focus group of ECE providers; samples drawn to reflect geography & type of care	Dates noted; Results reported	

	concerns and funding)			
	Summarize key sources of information available to families to learn about and choose ECE settings	Focus groups of families of vulnerable children	Dates noted; Results recorded and reported	
2. Strategic Plan				
Build on existing efforts through the Early Childhood Action Plan	Develop actions & timelines to advance ECAP priorities	Specific action and timelines	Actions Implemented Timelines met and/or revised as needed	Broad-base of stakeholders: Early Childhood Advisory Council members
	Partner with NC Early Childhood Foundation to improve collection & analysis of data on shared measures for optimal development; Identify data needs for other measures of low quality or missing data	Specify measures from NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative;  Identify specific areas of need (review research, convene experts, etc.)	Measures identified as noted  New or proxy measures identified	NC Early Childhood Foundation in collaboration with DCDEE and other ECE partners
Engaging Stakeholders	Partner with Smart Start, Head Start, CCR&R & other family support programs to host conversations with parents about	Focus groups; ongoing conversations sponsored by host organizations	Meeting dates noted. Results recorded and reported	DCDEE, NCPC, Head Start, CCR&R, others

	challenges, information needs, and support needed.			
	Leverage existing networks (extensive list in text) to engage diverse leaders in Action Teams	Specific sources identified by partner	Meetings held and documented; results recorded and reported	
3. Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge: Comprehensive Approach to family Engagement				
3.1 Meaningfully engage families to inform policies and practices. Develop NC Family Engagement Leadership Team	Leadership team to develop: - Family engagement framework & Strategic Plan - Parent/Family advisory process/groups - State Coordinator to support all aspects	Meetings of representatives across our diverse mixed delivery system Focus groups and surveys of families for input	- Meeting dates documented and results recorded -Focus group dates documented; results reported -Surveys summarized and reported. -Final framework/principles Developed State Parent/Family Advisory Group established -Coordinator hired	Family Engagement Leadership Team (diverse cross-agency)
3.2 Provide support to up to 8 communities to improve & promote family engagement across systems	NCPC to lead: -Training using a systems approach -Coaching for pilot communities - Feedback loops from community to FELT	Training dates; surveys of participants  Materials developed Coaching Process	- Trainings completed (dates noted) - Results of surveys and inputs summarized & reported - Coaching implemented; dates tracked; and results recorded	NCPC – Lead Family Engagement Leadership Team

			- Feedback loops established	
Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices				
4.1 Single Portal for Pre-k Enrollment	- 3 Smart Start Partnerships using single portal to teach and mentor other local partners; -Help bring other local partners together (e.g., social services, public schools, Head Start, and child care resource and referral) to determine the best way to implement universal enrollment in their communities	Knowledge of 3 contractors & Mentoring process; Feedback from mentored contractors and partners (interviews, focus groups) on lessons learned;	Deliverable: Universal application and enrollment process ready to implement for four-year-old children across multiple programs	DCDEE; 3 mentor contractors; mentored contractors
4.2 Create statewide Transitions Plan; Coordinator	-Transition Plan Coordinator hired to oversee all aspects Building on Phase 1 pilot of 3 school systems, expand to 15 counties in Phase 2 -Develop final versions of Child development	National review of research;  Interviews, focus groups, and surveys on usefulness of information and inform final versions of Form and Plan	Coordinator hired  Deliverables: Child Development Form; Local Planning Template  Interviews & focus group dates recorded; results reported  Survey results reported	Transitions Coordinator DCDEE NC Dept. of Public Instruction

	Form and Transition Plan -Phase 1 pilots Transition Planning Template -Phase II pilot Child Development Form			
4.3 Enhance NC ECIDS – expand types and usefulness of data	-Develop common home visiting metrics in effort to include these programs; -Add Kg-third grade outcomes and selected K-12 data (EOG test results, reading proficiency, expulsion rates) to NC ECIDS -Determine needs of data users for better alignment of data across systems - Head Start data extraction	Convene meetings of NC Home Visiting Consortium;  Work with NCDPI and K-12 data system  -Survey early childhood data users on purposes & uses of data and unmet data needs  - Head Start data extracted from Child Plus database	Meeting dates logged Results reported; HV metrics developed Meeting dates logged Key data to be included identified; System updated  -Surveys summarized and results reports; implications for NC ECIDS identified	DCDEE, NCDPI, NCPC, CCR&R, NC Home Visiting Consortium  Early childhood researchers and other users
Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality: Increase Quality of Infant/Toddler Care (NCB1)				
In selected 5-star centers in need of high quality I/T care not served by Early Head Start	-Provide high quality technical assistance to classroom teachers and administrators -Increase family support	-Weekly support, consultation  - Family participation  -ASQ-3, ASQ-SE; referral for other	Support sessions documentation  Infant Toddler Specialists hired	-Child Care Services Association - -Statewide Infant Toddler Project Manager

	and engagement activities; work with site administrators to develop policies & programs - Provide developmental screenings for each child enrolled in NCB1 class  -Support I/T workforce with improved compensation, planning times, releases for professional development	assessment made as necessary  - T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship data to increase education and AWARD\$ supplement data for salaries	Site selection rubric developed and sites selected  -Assessments completed & documented; results reported in aggregate  - Policies in place; compensation adjusted	-Infant Toddler Advisory Committee  Infant Toddler Specialists  Infant Toddler Mental Health consultants
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### G. Logic Model

Figure 1 shows the logic model for the NC PDG B-5 proposed activities. Each component of the model is described below.

**Inputs.** The inputs of a logic model are generally the resources (e.g., people, funding) needed to accomplish the activities. For NC, key inputs include funding, staff, and partners. PDG funds are needed to support the particular activities, and other funding sources are needed for ongoing support of ECE programs (e.g., CCDF) and initiatives that will undergird the PDG efforts. Some agency staff are critical for managing and implementing the grant (see grant management description in Section J). A larger group of state agency staff, from multiple agencies, are particularly important for the success of the family engagement activities because they must value the work (e.g., alignment of efforts, new strategies to meaningfully engage families) and

have time to devote to it. Finally, partners are another major input needed to successfully implement the PDG activities. As noted throughout this application, NC is relying on a range of partners to implement this work. Key partners include the NCPC, Head Start State Collaboration Office, NCECF, CCSA, as well as the range of partners across the initiatives the PDG B-5 will coordinate with and enhance, including the ECAP, Pathways, and the NC Think Babies Coalition. All of these inputs are needed to successfully implement the proposed NC activities.

**Activities.** The PDG B-5 strategies in a logic model generally show the “what” or the interventions or changes that are intended to produce the outcomes of interest. The proposed 10 activities for NC’s PDG B-5 application (excluding grant management, which we consider an input) are described in the Approach sections of the application (see those sections for more detailed descriptions). The logic model includes a very brief short-hand description of each activity and visually shows how activities support different short-term outcomes. A later section describes which activities support which short-term outcomes.

**Oversight and Evaluation Processes.** Before describing how the activities support the outcomes, it is important to note that the logic model also shows two continual processes that will run throughout the PDG B-5 grant (and beyond). These are represented in the bars that run across the top and bottom of the logic model. The top bar represents the ECAC, which provides high-level oversight as well as supports the coordination and collaboration of the early childhood system. To help build their capacity to provide oversight of this grant, we request funding for the Governor’s Office to support the ECAC (see p.11). The bar at the bottom represents the role of data and evaluation in helping NC leaders and policymakers. We want to ensure that NC leaders have and use data to understand the effectiveness of the PDG B-5 activities, specifically, and, more generally, to understand our progress toward reaching the long-term outcome. We have

proposed Activity 4.3 to expand the NC ECIDS, to provide more data and make it easier to have some information that policymakers and leaders can use to determine the effectiveness of PDG B-5 and other efforts to reach our outcomes.

**Outcomes.** Outcomes show the “why” of the activities; they articulate the expected changes or improvements if the activities are implemented well. Short-term outcomes represent those outcomes that are expected to be seen first, followed by medium-term outcomes that may take a few years to reach. Long-term outcomes often take multiple years to reach. Together, the set of outcomes should logically offer a roadmap to help ensure that the activities are on the right path, so to speak, to producing the long-term outcome.

**Short-Term Outcomes.** The logic model includes three main short-term outcomes. Multiple activities will help reach the first short-term outcome: Early childhood programs are better able to serve children and families. The B-5 NA and Strategic Planning (Activities 1 & 2) will lead to the identification of new activities to improve quality, efficiency, and coordination. These future TBD activities are represented in a box with a dashed line. The implementation of these new projects, then, will help programs be better able to serve children and families (e.g., strengthen their quality, expand their supports for families). Quality improvement to support programs serving infants and toddlers (Activity 5) will ensure that programs are better able to serve families with infants and toddlers.

Two of the tasks within the family engagement activity support the second short-term outcome: State and local agencies are more likely to offer services that meet the needs of families with young children. As described in the *Maximizing Parent Knowledge, Engagement, and Choice* section, NC is going to work with leaders across state agencies to align and strengthen family engagement activities so that families are meaningfully engaged in the development of programs

and policies at the state level (Activity 3). Engaging families in the development and refinement of state programs and policies will increase the likelihood that those programs will meet the needs of families with young children. We also recognize the importance of supporting family engagement across the wide array of programs at the community level. As noted in the previous section of the application, there are currently various efforts to support family engagement.

Through the PDG B-5, NC will provide technical assistance to local community agencies and support alignment across the various local initiatives as well as between state and local efforts (also Activity 3). This support to locals will also help ensure that agencies offer services that meet the needs of families in their community.

A final group of activities will help us meet the third short-term outcome: More families of young children know about services and can easily access them. Translating information for families into non-English languages (Activity 3.4) will directly improve access to information among those families. We also want to try creative ways to connect families with information, through partnerships with organizations that already have strong connections with families (Activity 3.1). These new strategies should result in more families of young children knowing about the available resources and how to access them. Activity 3.3, supporting NC's Resource Platform, will to help various professionals, like pediatricians, make referrals for families (and follow up on those referrals). This, too, should help ensure that families can easily access services. We also want to support local communities interested in offering a single portal of enrollment of services across multiple ECE programs (Activity 4.1). Having a single place to enroll for services should make it easier for families to know about the various services and access them. Finally, a state-level transition coordinator (Activity 4.2) to support expansion and alignment of kindergarten transition activities will help ensure that families who need services

during the transition period will access them (short-term outcome) as well as help ensure that NC offers a range of high-quality services that meet families' needs (a medium-term outcome described below).

**Medium-Term Outcomes.** The logic model includes five medium-term outcomes. As more early childhood programs are better able to serve children and families (short-term outcome) and as state and local agencies are more likely to offer services that meet the needs of families (short-term outcome), then we will be more likely to have a mixed delivery system that offers a continuum of high-quality services that meet families' needs (medium-term outcome). Once that is in place, then families and children who need services are more likely to use services (medium-term outcome). The children, in turn, who receive needed services are more likely to be healthy and learning. If more families who need services actually receive services, then they are more likely to provide a safe, nurturing environment and support their children's health and development (medium-term outcome). If families of young children know about services and can easily access them (short-term outcome), then those families will feel more supported as parents, which also increases the likelihood that they will provide a safe, nurturing environment.

**Long-Term Outcome.** All of the activities in NC's PDG B-5 proposal will help us achieve the short- and medium-term outcomes necessary to reach the long-term outcome: By 2025, all NC young children from birth to 8 will be healthy, safe and nurtured, and learning and ready to succeed. This is the long-term outcome delineated in our NC ECAP, which provides the overarching vision and framework for NC's PDG B-5 application.

**Project Goals, Plans, and Activities are Well-Developed and Parallel Those of the Logic**

**Model:** The *Approach* section of this application provides a thorough description of the activities and how they will help us reach our outcomes. The goals for the activities will help us achieve

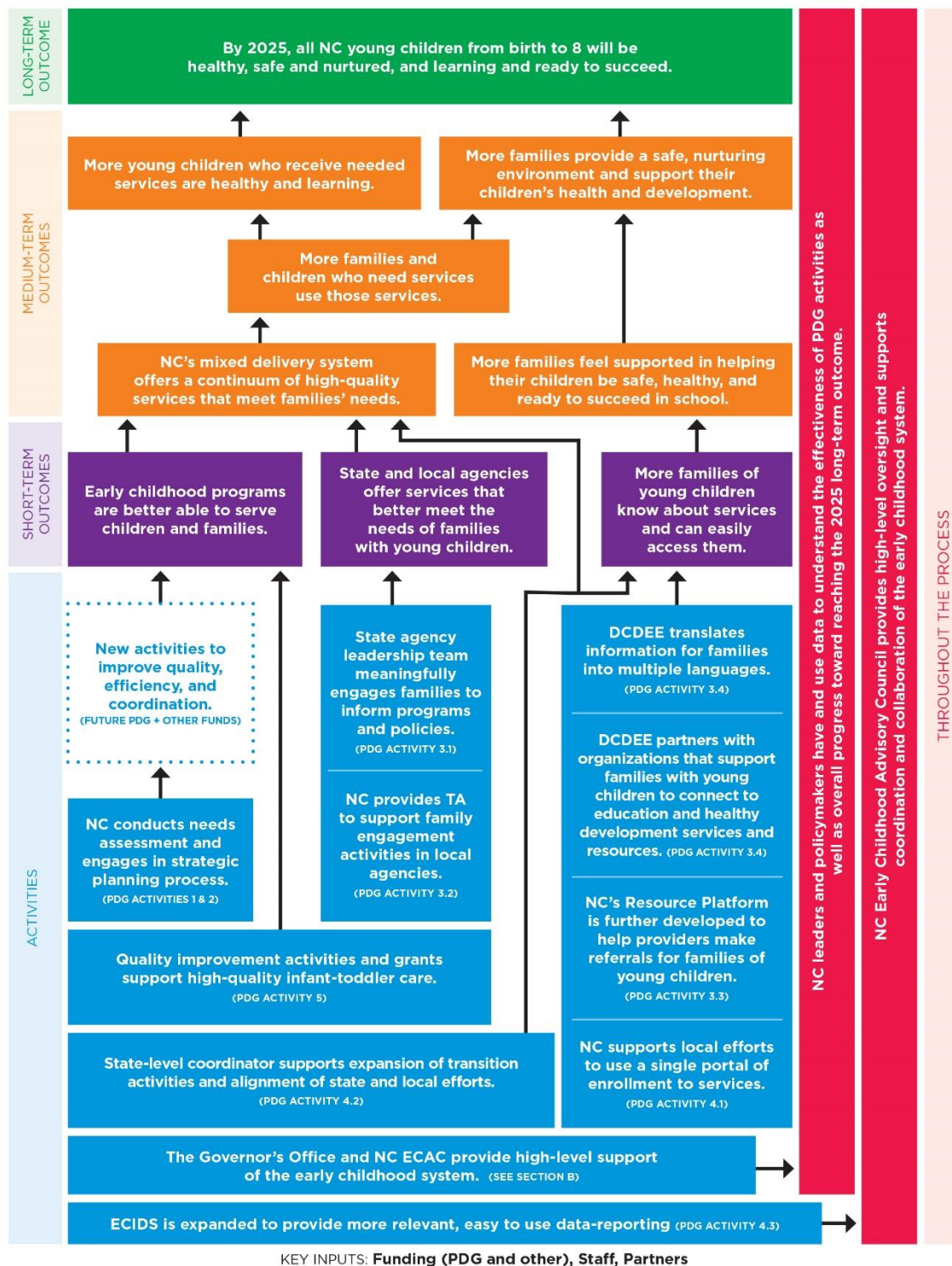
the short-term outcomes, which will then support later outcomes. As described in the *Organizational Capacity and Management* section, we have built on our successes and lessons learned to ensure that the plans and activities can be implemented successfully as part of this grant.

**Logic Model is Well-Defined, Clear, and Provides Conceptual Framework:** The logic model in Figure 1, along with the narrative above, clearly defines the key components of a logic model and provides a conceptual framework for all the proposed NC activities. The activities proposed address the key types of activities described in *Section I. Program Description* of the FOA (e.g., maximizing parent knowledge, engagement, and choice; sharing best practice).

**Logic Model Demonstrates a Clear Association between Inputs, Activities, Short-Term and Long-Term Outcomes, Accurately Depicts Proposal, and Informs the Scope of the Project:**

The logic model in Figure 1 visually demonstrates the linkages between the inputs, activities, and outcomes—noting the importance of ECAC oversight and the use of data to inform the ongoing work. The short- and medium-term outcomes describe the types of changes we expect to see in the first few years that will collectively help us achieve our long-term outcome. Each proposed activity, as described in the *Approach* section of the application, is represented in the logic model.

Figure 1.



## H. Project Sustainability and Dissemination Plan

DCDEE has previously been successful in sustaining activities that were implemented or piloted with one-time funding, and will likewise work with partners to continue effective elements of activities if PDG B-5 funds are awarded. For example, the NC ECIDS was developed with RTT-ELC funds, with on-going maintenance costs and contracted services funded with the CCDF and state funds. Other RTT-ELC funded activities produced training modules or deliverables that were able to be absorbed into some of DCDEE's CCDF contracts, where service delivery to the early childhood workforce and to families already existed. DCDEE will work with the ECAC and other partners to determine the best way to sustain activities and access funding needed. DCDEE's approach for effective project sustainment is described below, as well as plans for disseminating information about the PDG B-5.

**Sustaining Key Elements of Grant Projects:** At the end of the grant, DCDEE will consult with the ECAC and other early childhood collaborative groups to review available data from the grant's evaluation to consider the outcomes achieved and lessons learned from activities funded by the grant. These groups have cross agency representation of early childhood programs and services and will help DCDEE identify key elements of activities that were successfully implemented during the grant.

Outcomes will be reviewed to ensure they align with the grant's strategic plan and the NC ECAP. Feedback from partners will give information on opportunities to embed key elements of grant activities within existing communications or efforts. For example, on-line resources that are developed during the grant may be easily updated and electronically disseminated to partners.

**Obtaining Support from Key Individuals and Organizations:** Once the key elements of grant activities to be continued are identified, DCDEE will consult with partners to determine how

continuing any of the activities initiated by the PDG B-5 may broaden outreach or services to children or families in other programs. This will help identify other stakeholders who may be invested in the activity's outcomes. Data from the grant evaluation and the needs assessment process will help show whether the approach to service delivery was effective and reached the children and families who needed the service. DCDEE will consider any changes needed to ensure the project is sustainable. For example, if the activity was locally administered with state support, DCDEE will pursue collaboration among partners with local infrastructure for how it may be effectively scaled up and replicated in more areas where services are needed.

DCDEE will also consult with these partners to ensure the outcomes for on-going activities align with existing efforts, and to determine if additional data may need to be collected.

**Maintaining Collaboration Efforts:** DCDEE will estimate the budget needed to sustain a project based on actual expenditures of the grant activity, and will consider any cost efficiencies that may be possible if the activity can be added to existing services that are delivered by partners. For example, it may be possible for an existing set of consultants funded in another project or program to continue to provide some services or technical assistance initiated under PDG B-5.

While it is difficult to project whether new state funds will be available to sustain grant activities, increased CCDF quality funds provide an opportunity to bridge funding gaps to sustain activities piloted by the grant. DCDEE is willing to commit to using CCDF for continuing scholarships for infant/toddler teachers that will be initiated in Activity 5. There are also private philanthropic funds that NC early childhood partners may be able to access for activities. DCDEE will consult with the ECAC and other collaborative partners to determine whether existing funds may be leveraged or blended to allow for grant services to be continued.

DCDEE will regularly update and consult with grant partners to determine whether the continued activity's goals or services should evolve based on the needs of children and families.

**Dissemination Plan:** DCDEE's goal for dissemination is to ensure that grant objectives and activities are clearly communicated to audiences, such as families, partners, and the public.

Clear communication will increase the opportunity for families to know what services are available to them and for partners to support the activities that are taking place.

The grant's needs assessment and strategic plan will help DCDEE identify target audiences who would benefit from information about grant activities. DCDEE's website will link to a landing page that has information on grant activities and projects. DCDEE will also send email blasts to early childhood programs and partners to provide updates on activities, and will provide partners with information that can be included in their communications. Updates on grant activities will be provided to groups and partners during their regular meetings and events.

Grant funded staff will draft communications to be disseminated and existing DCDEE staff will be able to post to the website and send email blasts. The grant's evaluation plan as well as feedback from community and state partners will help inform DCDEE whether target audiences have received and used grant information.

## **J. Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds**

DCDEE will provide oversight of the PDG B-5 funds through fiscal and programmatic management, procurement and contracting, and subrecipient monitoring.

**Fiscal and Programmatic Management:** A grant manager will oversee all grant funded activities. The position will ensure that grant activity milestones and deliverables are met by the approved timeline; work with DCDEE's budget office to ensure grant funds are spent according to the approved budget; work with DCDEE's lead monitoring coordinator to ensure any grant

funded contracts are monitored appropriately; ensure that required grant reporting is completed; and collaborate with partners to ensure that grant activities align with efforts of existing groups within the early childhood system. Fiscal management of the PDG grant funds will be overseen by DCDEE's budget office, who will approve any purchase requisitions, travel reimbursements, or contract reimbursements, and code the expenditures so they are tracked in DCDEE's budget. Expenditures and federal funds drawn will be reconciled regularly with the State's accounting system.

**Procurement, Contracting, and Subrecipient Monitoring:** DCDEE will follow appropriate procurement and contract procedures for items or services purchased with grant funds. DCDEE will ensure that any contracts for grant activities include measurable outcomes and specific budget line items. All contracts will include the appropriate assurances/certifications that funding will be used for approved purposes. A contract administrator will be assigned to each contract to review contractors' reimbursement requests to ensure that expenditures are allowable and reasonable. DCDEE's monitoring team will assess contract compliance with all fiscal and programmatic requirements, according to its monitoring plan. This may include on-site monitoring visits to contractors to test transactions from General Ledger postings for selected months to ensure that contract expenditures reimbursed were allowable and properly accounted for and align with the contract budget. Any items not in compliance are addressed through a corrective action plan with the contractor.

## K. Budget and Budget Justification

### Total Proposed Budget

Budget Category	Federal Share	Non-Federal Share	Total Cost
Travel	\$ 34,126		\$ 34,126
Contractual	\$4,471,662	\$1,700,000	\$6,171,662
Other	\$1,813,708	\$ 298,550	\$2,112,258
Grand Total	\$6,319,496	\$1,998,550	\$8,318,046

Budget Justification: NC proposes a \$8.3 million budget (\$6.3 million Federal/\$1.99 million non-Federal), with costs budgeted in the Travel, Contractual, and Other categories. Grant supported staff costs are shown in the Contractual and Other budget categories since staff will be funded through contracts or through the state's temporary agency in order to staff up quickly. With no budget line items in the Personnel category, nothing is calculated/budgeted for Indirect Cost. A significant portion of the budget is for contractual services, but specific contractors are not identified since DCDEE must follow NC's procurement regulations before contracting with public or private entities. The amount budgeted for a contract is our best estimate of costs based on the scope of work and any previous work contracted.

The total budget is shown below, then a budget breakout by each activity. Detailed justification follows each of the activity budgets for a full explanation of costs. There is not a separate budget for technical assistance activities (TA) since these efforts are woven throughout budget items for Activities 3, 4, and 5.

### Activity 1: B-5 Needs Assessment

Budget Category	Description	Federal Share	Non-Federal Share	Total Cost
Contract	Conduct Needs Assessment	\$ 650,000		\$ 650,000
	<b>Activity 1 Total</b>	<b>\$ 650,000</b>		<b>\$ 650,000</b>

Budget Justification: The B-5 NA is budgeted at \$650,000 for contractual services, with one or more contractors, with a state university likely to be a contractor for their expertise in analyzing and synthesizing data. The contracted services include reviewing existing information for the needs assessment and collecting new information needed; providing an analysis of available data for B-5 state supported services and identifying new data needed; and providing an analysis of cost modeling for subsidized child care payments. The cost is estimated based on these tasks and a previous statewide needs assessment conducted several years ago that was budgeted at the same amount.

### Activity 2: B-5 Strategic Plan

Budget Category	Description	Federal Share	Non-Federal Share	Total Cost
Contract	Develop Strategic Plan	\$ 225,000		\$ 225,000
	<b>Activity 2 Total</b>	<b>\$ 225,000</b>		<b>\$ 225,000</b>

Budget Justification: Strategic Plan development is budgeted at \$225,000 for contractual services, to include stakeholder engagement and alignment with previous collaborative work. The cost is estimated based on similar work in a previous contract for a statewide professional development blueprint.

### **Activity 3: Maximizing Parent Knowledge and Choice**

Budget Category	Description	Federal Share	Non-Federal Share	Total Cost
Travel	Travel - Family Engagement Coordinator	\$ 3,777		\$ 3,777
Travel	Travel – Translation/Multicultural Coord.	\$ 3,777		\$ 3,777
Contract	Family Engagement – UNC TV Public Media NC	\$ 500,000		\$ 500,000
Contract	Family Engagement grants and activities	\$ 450,000	\$ 900,000	\$1,350,000
Contract	Translation services	\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000
Other	Family Engagement Coordinator	\$ 85,700		\$ 85,700
Other	Translation/Multicultural Coordinator	\$ 85,700		\$ 85,700
Other	NC Resource Platform	\$ 528,500	\$ 158,550	\$ 687,050
Other	Scholarships for families - conferences	\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000
<b>Activity 3 Total</b>		<b>\$1,777,454</b>	<b>\$1,058,550</b>	<b>\$2,836,004</b>

#### Budget Justification:

Travel – Travel is necessary to attend stakeholder meetings, trainings, and family engagement activities. Travel for 2 DCDEE positions is estimated to be \$3,777 each based on an estimated 50 trips x 100 miles roundtrip x \$0.545 per miles + 10 overnight stays at \$105.20 per diem (hotel+meals).

#### Contractual

- Family engagement partnership with UNC-TV Public Media NC – it is likely that DCDEE would contract with UNC-TV Public Media NC based on their expertise in communications and early childhood education. \$500,000 is estimated based on staffing needed to coordinate and provide events and trainings and implement texting and marketing efforts (approximately \$200,000 for 8-10 staff), 4 PBS branded family events @ \$15,000/event; an educational texting service (estimated \$50,000 for development and \$25,000 for marketing), local training events (4 sessions estimated @ \$1,000 each plus 400 PBS Play Pads @ \$80 each); on-air and on-line messaging and marketing (10 short-form features estimated @ \$7,500 each); and other costs to support these efforts.
- Family Engagement activities – DCDEE will contract with an entity with expertise and infrastructure to deliver family engagement activities and TA. \$450,000 is estimated to be needed for: \$240,000 for 8 grants @ \$30,000 each to improve and promote family engagement across systems; \$150,000 estimated for staff and travel (Family Engagement Coordinator to oversee the work of the Family Engagement Leadership Team and a Facilitator to facilitate state stakeholder meetings/efforts); \$16,000 estimated for developing and providing trainings (training toolkits + training for 35 people); and other supporting costs that may be needed. In addition, \$900,000 is available during the grant period for non-Federal matching funds from the NCPC who oversees family engagement and communication activities of local Smart Start partnerships.

- A contract for translation services for communications related to family engagement is estimated to be \$100,000 depending on the number and complexity of materials or on-line communications to be translated.

#### Other

- 2 DCDEE positions are needed – a Family Engagement Coordinator to oversee Activity 3 efforts and a Translation/Multicultural Coordinator to oversee coordination of diverse communication and outreach. Positions will be hired through the state’s temporary agency at an estimated cost of \$85,700 each (3<sup>rd</sup> quartile of Human Service Plan/Evaluator III job class + \$2/hour temporary agency fee + FICA and \$141/month health insurance cost).
- An estimated \$528,500 is budgeted for updating the NC Resource Platform with ECE resources (estimated \$50,000); for approximately 1,000 Platform licenses (estimated \$216 each); for training, TA and on-boarding of ECE providers (estimated \$210,000); communications (estimated \$15,000); and staffing (estimated \$37,500). DCDEE will work with DHHS on the best way to reimburse for these costs. In addition, \$158,550 in non-Federal matching funds during the grant period is available from the Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation for the Platform.
- An estimated \$20,000 is budgeted for scholarships (estimated \$200/scholarship) for an estimated 100 families to attend conferences that promote/support family engagement.

#### **Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices**

Budget Category	Description	Federal Share	Non-Federal Share	Total Cost
Travel	Travel - Universal Enrollment Coord.	\$ 2,161		\$ 2,161
Travel	Travel – Transition Coordinator	\$ 2,687		\$ 2,687
Travel	Stakeholders Data Alignment Meetings	\$ 1,600		\$ 1,600
Travel	8 regional training meetings for teachers	\$ 12,642		\$ 12,642
Contract	Stipends for universal enrollment project	\$ 30,000		\$ 30,000
Contract	Develop/deliver 8 teacher trainings + TA	\$ 90,000		\$ 90,000
Contract	TA/Consultation – NC ECIDS initiatives	\$ 81,662		\$ 81,662
Contract	Survey EC data users, compile findings	\$ 200,000		\$ 200,000
Contract	NC Pre-K support – universal enrollment		\$ 400,000	\$ 400,000
Contract	NC Pre-K support for transition		\$ 400,000	\$ 400,000
Other	Universal Enrollment Coordinator	\$ 85,700		\$ 85,700
Other	Transition Coordinator	\$ 85,700		\$ 85,700
Other	Reimbursement for subs – teacher transition trainings	\$ 34,700		\$ 34,700
Other	DPI Data Integration into NC ECIDS	\$ 200,000	\$ 140,000	\$ 340,000
Other	NC ECIDS Enhancements	\$ 525,000		\$ 525,000
<b>Activity 4 Total</b>		<b>\$1,351,852</b>	<b>\$ 940,000</b>	<b>\$2,291,852</b>

#### Budget Justification:

Travel – Travel is necessary to attend stakeholder meetings, trainings, and family engagement activities. Travel for 2 DCDEE positions is estimated based on an estimated 30 trips x 100 miles roundtrip x \$0.545 per miles + 5 or 10 overnight stays for the Enrollment Coordinator and the Transition Coordinator respectively, at \$105.20 per diem (hotel+meals). Travel costs of \$800 for mileage/meals are estimated for 2 day-long meetings each of 15-20 stakeholders per meeting to

align home visiting metrics across programs. Travel costs of \$12,642 are estimated for approximately 288 people per regional meeting based on projected mileage/meal costs.

#### Contractual

- Contracts for stipends of \$10,000 each are needed for the 3 participating local NC Pre-K contractors who have committed to share their best practices for universal enrollment application with other contractors.
- A contract is needed for development and delivery of 8 trainings and TA on transition to kindergarten at an estimated cost of \$90,000 for staff time and travel. This is a similar cost to previous contracts for training development and delivery.
- An estimated \$81,662 is needed for contracted services for TA and consultation across multiple NC ECIDS initiatives, and to provide technical work on home visiting data alignment. The estimate is based on contractor costs for providing similar services.
- \$200,000 is needed to contract to survey early childhood data users, compile findings, and make data recommendations. The estimate is based on the cost of a previous contract to survey for early childhood rates and costs.
- DCDEE's NC Pre-K contractors currently provide support to NC Pre-K sites related to enrollment/application and transition to kindergarten, and \$400,000 for each of these activities is available from DCDEE contract expenditures for non-Federal matching funds during the grant period.

#### Other

- 2 DCDEE positions are needed to facilitate sharing best practice regarding universal enrollment of 4-year-olds across services (Universal Enrollment Coordinator) and to oversee coordination of the state's transition efforts (Transition Coordinator). Positions will be hired through the state's temporary agency at an estimated cost of \$85,700 each (3<sup>rd</sup> quartile of Human Service Plan/Evaluator III job class job class + \$2/hour temporary agency fee + FICA and \$141/month health insurance cost).
- An estimated \$34,700 is budgeted for the cost for substitute teachers for kindergarten teachers (approximately \$300/day) to attend 8 transition training sessions
- Costs to improve ECE data sharing the NC ECIDS is estimated to be \$200,000 for integrating public school data from NC DPI. DCDEE will supply \$140,000 in non-Federal matching funds for supporting NC ECIDS, through state funds expended during the grant period. Another enhancement to develop data visualization and online report enhancements on the NC ECIDS online platform is estimated to cost \$500,000. In addition, \$25,000 is budgeted for extracting Head Start data from Child Plus into NC ECIDS. Estimates are based on similar system development work within NCDHHS.

### **Activity 5: Improving Quality**

Budget Category	Description	Federal Share	Non-Federal Share	Total Cost
Contract	NCB1 and efforts to improve quality of infant/toddler care	\$1,100,000		\$1,100,000
<b>Activity 5 Total</b>		<b>\$1,100,000</b>		<b>\$1,100,000</b>

Budget Justification: DCDEE will contract for services to build on the infant/toddler quality initiative NCB1 to prepare ECE programs that care for infants/toddlers for increased quality. Services will include high quality TA to teachers and administrators, increased family support and engagement activities, developmental screenings for infants and toddlers, improved

compensation to infant/toddler teachers, and scholarships to increase their education. Cost is estimated based on current contracted work to support improved quality of infant/toddler care.

### Other Grant Activities Budgeted

Budget Category	Description	Federal Share	Non-Federal Share	Total Cost
Travel	In-state travel for grant manager	\$ 3,232		\$ 3,232
Travel	Required Grantee Travel – DC conference	\$ 4,250		\$ 4,250
Contract	Program Performance Evaluation (PPE)	\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000
Contract	NC ECAC facilitation, collaboration	\$ 45,000		\$ 45,000
Other	Grant Manager	\$ 85,700		\$ 85,700
Other	Contract Manager – 50% time	\$ 37,133		\$ 37,133
Other	Budget Officer – 50% time	\$ 39,875		\$ 39,875
<b>Other Grant Activities Total</b>		<b>\$1,215,190</b>		<b>\$1,215,190</b>

Travel – Travel is necessary to attend stakeholder meetings, trainings, and family engagement activities. Travel for 1 DCDEE position is estimated based on an estimated 40 trips x 100 miles roundtrip x \$0.545 per miles + 10 overnight stays at \$105.20 per diem (hotel+meals). Required grant travel for 4 staff to Washington D.C. for 3 days is estimated to be \$1,062 per person (estimated air fare, hotel cost, transportation to hotel, baggage fees, meals, airport parking, etc.).

#### Contractual

- \$1,000,000 is estimated for contracted services to conduct the PPE required by the grant. The PPE will incorporate summative data for short-term outputs and outcomes for the first year, such as activities completed, numbers served/participating, as well as focus group and survey findings for specific activities. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and used to determine how well the activities are being implemented, as well as their success. The estimated cost is based on similar contracted evaluations of the NC Pre-K program.
- An estimated \$45,000 is needed for contracted services for collaboration and facilitation with the NC ECAC, as many of these grant activities will be coordinated with them.

#### Other

- 3 DCDEE positions are needed – a Grant Manager to oversee all grant activities; a Contracts Manager to oversee contract development and administration; and a Budget Officer to manage the grant budget. Positions will be hired through the state's temporary agency at an estimated cost of \$85,700 for the Grant Manager (3<sup>rd</sup> quartile of Human Service Plan/Evaluator III job class); \$37,133 for the Contract Manager (3<sup>rd</sup> quartile of Human Service Plan/Evaluator II job class at 50% time); \$39,875 for the Budget Officer (3<sup>rd</sup> quartile of Fiscal/Business Compliance Analyst I job class at 50% time); + \$2/hour temporary agency fee + FICA and \$141/month health insurance cost for each position.

**Commitment of Non-Federal Resources:** DCDEE will meet the required 30% non-federal share of \$1,998,550 by the end of the grant period and the source of these funds is identified in each activity's budget justification. The attached agreement confirms that NCPC commits to providing \$900,000 in match for Smart Start family engagement activities. NCDHHS and DCDEE commits to provide a total of \$1,098,550 in match as follows: \$800,000 from NC Pre-K expenditures supporting transition and enrollment activities; \$140,000 in on-going funds for NC ECIDS operation; and \$158,550 in funds allocated for the NC Resource Platform. None of the funds identified as Non-Federal share are counted toward any other federal match requirement.



**TO:** Anna Carter, Director  
NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

**FROM:** Cindy Watkins, President  
NC Partnership for Children (NCPG)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cindy Watkins", is written over the printed name and title.

**RE:** Matching Funds for the North Carolina Preschool Development Grant B-5  
(NC PDG)

**DATE:** November 9, 2018

On behalf of the NCPG, I am pleased to agree that Smart Start expenditures totaling \$900,000 will be available next year to match federal funding for Activity 3 (Family Engagement) in the NC PDG. The Smart Start state funds are not counted for any other federal grant and are expended by local Smart Start partnerships and tracked at the state level by the NCPG.

Smart Start is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year of bringing communities together to support young children's healthy growth and development in North Carolina. Through successful collaboration with families, early educators, public schools, health care providers, and others, Smart Start's 75 partnerships across the state have built a strong infrastructure for identifying and delivering needed services for children at the local level.

Smart Start will be a vital partner as you implement the NC PDG activities that focus on family engagement and sharing best practices. Smart Start's family-focused programs provide parents with information and tools to increase their knowledge of child development and positive parenting practice. These are the areas that will be supported by Smart Start expenditures to be used as match. In addition, Smart Start's collaborative history also includes sharing best practices among communities, such as efforts to support quality Prekindergarten experiences for children and their successful transition to kindergarten. This is another area where Smart Start aligns very well with PDG activities.

Smart Start looks forward to working with DCDEE and other partners to strengthen the early childhood education system in North Carolina through strategic planning made possible by the NC PDG.

#### The North Carolina Partnership for Children

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[www.smartstart.org](http://www.smartstart.org) [smartstart](https://www.facebook.com/smartstart) [@smartstart](https://twitter.com/smartstart) [smartstart](https://www.instagram.com/smartstart)

The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Tax ID #56-1856485. No grants or services were provided in connection with your contribution. Please retain this letter for your tax records and consult with your tax adviser regarding the deductibility of your contribution.